

My Brother, My Problem



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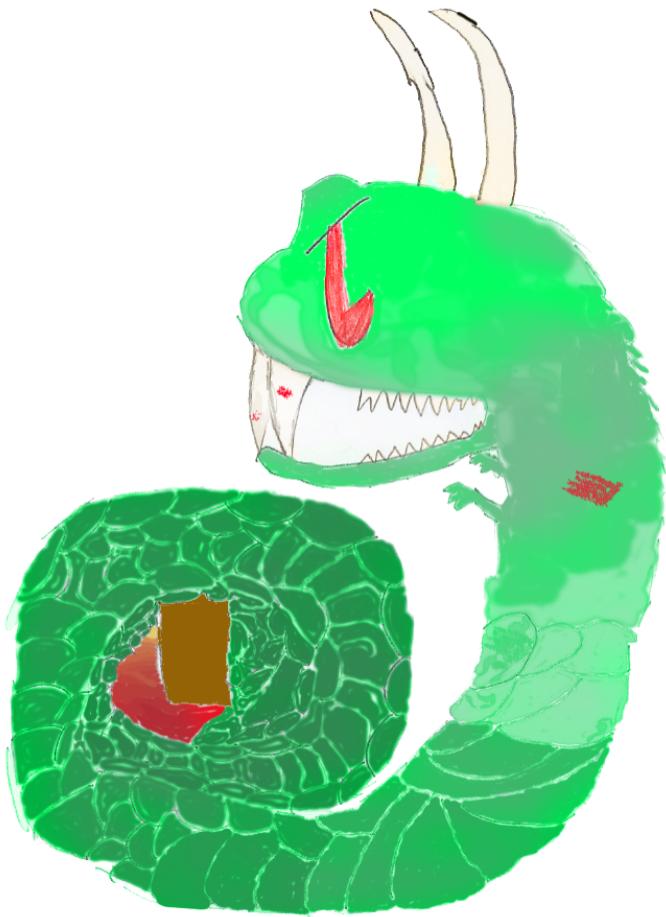
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Please enjoy my childhood memories with me.





Prologue

Boy has time passed. I originally wrote this book when I was a child in 2006. I was born on Flagday of 1993. So that means the story is written from the imagination of my 12 year old self. Back then I had no idea how to finish it. Publishing back then was far too complicated for me at that age. So I just held on to it on my hard drive. I decided to look at the book in 2020 and decided to publish it. It will be a great adventure story for many children to read. Full of action and mystery, with enough to keep the imagination going. How funny the story was written in the future in the time of 2050. There is quite a bit of time travel and things that do not normally exists, such as dragons or magic. There

will be many adventures that Randy will go through. Please enjoy!

Teleported



“Your Wish is My Command...”

My brother, Shanti loves to scare me. I really hate being scared, so I would try to scare him back, but it never really worked. It was almost as if he had the ability to predict my every move. When he scares someone he'll scare them until they jump out of their skin. Well at least it felt that way. Just scares the jeebers out of you. He is not someone you want to go trick or treating with.

All of that changed 1,000 years later, yes I said 1,000 years. Do you think it is possible to live 1,000 years? Or is ye blind and cannot see that with “great wisdom anything can be achieved”. That is something my grandma would always say to us. She never takes no or really any excuses for the matter. Why don't I just tell you what happened in this so-called story. Well if I am going to tell you the story, I'd better start from the beginning.

It all started when Shanti pushed me into the bushes or maybe it was that time I fell out of the tree, no it was definitely that time when I was misled off a cliff. To me it felt as if I died 3 times, but instead I had to lie in an itchy bed, in a coma, for a year. They always say that cats have 9 lives, perhaps I will be as fortunate. When I woke up he tells me “It could have been worse”. Do you have any idea how feels to be in a coma? Let me inform you. It feels cold, empty, cold, uncomfortable, cold, angry, cold, annoyed, and most importantly, cold! Just kidding! The hardest part was getting used to the time loss.

If you ask me I'd say Shanti is a big, scary, annoying, not one ounce of intelligence and confusing brat. I'm sorry about the annoying part. Anyone who talks and or lectures me is annoying. My mom is consistently at work and our dad is always on the computer. The sad part is he's always chatting, sending emails, and getting rejected from jobs. They have no time for a little guy like me once in a lifetime... except for Shanti. I guess you can say my family is...well dysfunctional. Even my neighborhood is dysfunctional. Maybe I just like to exaggerate. Maybe I'm right.

I live in a super-sized town called Toe-Bitter. I don't have the slightest clue why it is called Toe-Bitter. Maybe there was an old lady that lived across the street and everyone bit her toes because it tastes like candy. Or maybe everyone who lives here is cursed with bitter toes. Or the Mayor is just dumb. It's a mystery. We were originally from the city, so we have not the opportunity to fully adjust to the town life. It is really big but mostly of farm land or undeveloped territories.

I live in the time of 2050 and I am unaware of a lot of things. Mainly life but I won't deny I have a 4.0 or in mathematical terms: the value of x if $2x = 8.0$. I am somewhat of a nerd. Often time I speak in riddles or very cryptic. Something I call stay out of trouble syndrome.

So anyways, me and my brother were taunting each other like usual in my absolutely irregular life, when a commercial came on our TV that caught our eyes. It was an advertisement on a time machine. When Shanti saw it, he rushed to the phone as fast as a lightning bolt could hit metal. That's right!

Afterwards, when he hung up the phone the delivery was already at the door. Or so it seemed that way. Shanti opened the door and it was his orphan friend, Pencilneck. I

wonder what his parents were thinking when they had him. He matched his name pretty good. His skin was tan but his neck was yellow. His neck was very long, similar to a giraffe. Forget about what I said about Shanti being annoying this guy was the owner and King of Annoyingness. He was so mean that his eyebrows are always furrowed and thick at that. There I go again. Always complaining about how annoying something is. I seem to have many triggers. Or maybe I'm surrounded by clowns.

"Hey Randy, I got a gift for you," Pencilneck said in a babyish voice while putting the book in my face. "Yeah, you want this huh? Yeah I bet you do".

I saw the cover with Barney on it and couldn't resist. *Barney was one of my favorite character of one of my childhood memories.* I was trying, but I was unable to move, it's like I'm in a daze of some sort of thing. So that's it, it came out of me and I did it. I started jumping up and down and started repeating the words "Molly, molly, molly, molly, molly, molly, Billy, Billy, Billy, Billy, Billy, Billy, silly, silly, silly, silly". So apparently it was magical, possible a curse, but just for me?

"This is the last time they are going to make a mockery of me," I repeated in my head. I got so upset that I couldn't hear myself talking or thinking. Then I punched them both in the face. I punched them so hard they bleed. Or...that's what would have happened if I wasn't still chanting the words "Billy, Billy, Billy, Billy..." oh you get the point.

"Shanti, guess what I got...don't answer, a teleporter-thingy," Pencilneck surprised us.

Then Pencilneck showed Shanti the teleporter (which was very similar to the time machine we saw on TV a while ago). And I was still chanting the words and "Boom," we all

went to a space time continuum where we fell into an abyss. Five minutes later a mysterious man says “come, open your heart,” with an echo. “Either way you’re all going to suffer”. What does that even mean anyways? Just garbage right?

We did not listen to him but we spent some time screaming. We had no idea what was happening. What I did hear him say was “You will go wherever you are not suit to be comfortable”. These kinds of things make me think I am unaware of what is going on. He also said something like “Life is a war stay out of it or you will perish”. I had no clue what it means but I ended up in some grassy plains in the time of 1050, separated from both Shanti and Pencilneck. I wonder if we may find Macbeth.

“Clash,” went the swords as two somewhat human looking things fought. One looked superior with a small sword, a blood-drenched fur thing around his shoulder, and had gray hair and what appeared to be bunny ears. The other one was similar except he tried too hard, wore a blue sleeveless shirt, and had spiked-dog collar on his arm? It looked as if I were in feudal Japan, mostly because I had recently been studying feudal Japan in history for a month now, and the surroundings look similar to what I had been seeing in the textbook. Judging by the fighting they looked like rivals. I saw a girl who actually looked human, who looked like a school girl with her pink and white shirt and with a matching skirt. In her hand she held a lace. She looked frightened as the superior one attacked the blue one as if she was on his side. “Oh my god,” was my first thought, and then it was followed by “Am I in the Television”. The people here looked exactly like the people I saw on an anime show last night. I think it was called *Hokushi*. I mean, the show was awesome and everything, but being in it, where everyone and everything has the potential to kill you, isn’t.

“What is going on?” I mumbled to the black-haired looking girl who looked as though she was from my time. I recall her name was *Sakura*. They repeat their names repeatedly in every show from my point of view.

“Oh you see the one in the blue with a big sword in his hand? That’s Hokushi and the other one is Renaiku, Hokushi’s ex-brother who crossed over to the dark-side.” The girl responded without answering my question. Though everything was intense she wasn’t scared, not at all. In fact she was calm, as if she was used to it. And she confirmed my thought, I really am stuck in the tv.

“And what is your name?” making sure I wasn’t losing my mind I thought that if I ask her hoping she wouldn’t say *Sakura*. “Don’t say *Sakura*, Don’t say *Sakura*.” Repeating to myself.

“*Sakura*, now get lost,” how rude. I mean seriously. I know girls have their issues or whatever, but all I did was ask her for her name.

Regarding that, when she told me to get lost I ran fast, so fast I was a rabbit compared to a turtle. Then I tripped over a box. I picked up the box and read it. “Don’t open me” the box was written. Hmm...must be reverse psychology or something, but if you tell someone not to do something, that makes them want to do it even more.

“So it has come to this. Now a box is telling me what to do,” I said to myself.

I opened it a light appeared, as the light slowly vanished, the image of long, scaly dragon with red eyes became clearer and clearer. Did I mention that this thing was cute and cuddly? Not that I liked it, but if I gave it to some

chick at school she'd definitely keep it forever. That is until the dog gets a hold of it.

"Your wish is my command," the dragon said in a deep voice.

This dragon looks as though it came from a mysterious site, from a mysterious land, of a mysterious planet, in an anonymous galaxy where the care bears meet to go gallop in circles or whatever it is that they do.

"You're in my way," I told the dragon. Seriously, I didn't have time for fun in games at this moment. I'm already having a weird day, being that I still don't know exactly where I am.

"Your wish has been granted," the dragon responded and was on his way in the air with the box. "Oh by the way my name is Slithe," Could anyone be more random?

I felt so stupid and humiliated I cried and hit myself irrationally until my hands were swollen. I then saw a well and jumped in. When I got out of the well I was home. I was so glad to be home I hugged Shanti for the first time. I hugged my dad too, interrupting his conversation on the computer.

"Dang it I got rejected," my dad yelled.

That dragon really helped me. Even though he just talked, he must have granted my wish. Shanti stopped messing with me. Oh well, between just you and me this was all just a dream. What? What happened to Pencil neck you say? Well that my friend, is a whole different story.



Grandma Spell



“Could you create invisible ink...”

Being that my brother, Shanti, stopped trying to scare me, which turned out to scare me even more assiduously than before. The weird part is, he started taking me to cool places and all of a sudden enjoys playing games with me. Why? Why is this happening? Why can't Shanti become himself again? I'd rather be scared for the rest of my life than to have to deal with an abnormal, bizarre, yet blissful brother.

“Brother. Do you want to play catch?” My *new* brother asked me with a voice that he never used before that sounded as if he were possessed or even virtuous. Like some kind of robot that had to take orders to their creator.

“You can call me Randy. It’s not illegal yet” Ugh! I mean who uses the phrase “brother” to call someone. I seriously was beginning to think he was sick or on some type of drugs of some sort. That feeling crept me out the most.

“No gratitude to you, brother,” Shanti balked.

“Why do you keep calling me brother? You’re starting to annoy me!”

“Why do you insist that I call you Randy, brother?” Ok yeah. He was seriously trying to get me upset. Occasionally he was very good at that, doubting the fact that he seemed possessed, not himself, and that he didn’t have that

intimidating smirk on his face made it more complicated to tell if he was really sick or just trying another trick.

“Stop that! It is compulsory; I want you to call me Randy! And that’s final.” I totally snapped because of irritation. My mom always tells me that I needed to watch my anger and to control my temper tantrums. In my opinion, I don’t necessarily throw temper tantrums people are just guaranteed to make me mad and I have a special way of expressing my anger.

“Why? You are my brother, right?”

“That’s not my name though!”

This time Shanti didn’t reply. He just sat there miserably as if he received a scolding.

“Well, I guess you can call me brother, for now,” I told him pitifully. Not once has the thought “what is wrong with him?” left my mind.

Then I scampered upstairs to my room to look in my book of magic spells and potions that my Grandma gave me a time ago when I was three years old. She told me “If anything goes wrong, or something doesn’t appear to be what it is, always remember to look in this book. This will be our little secret.” Which was strangely weird how I only saw her once a year and every time I did she would repeat that. You’d think I’d get fed up with that, but I didn’t care, as long as I got to see her.

Enough about my grandma, I need something that will help me figure out what’s wrong with Shanti. Something like... possibly... a truth potion; something that will get him to tell me the truth on what is really going on. So I can figure out if he’s planning something or is he on any type of drugs

dad doesn't know about. Speaking of dad, I hardly seen him all day, last time I recall he was on the computer, but now it is as if he *vanished*. I guess I was being invisible to everyone so long that people started to become invisible to me; everyone, but Shanti. Oh how I wish he could be invisible, well maybe not. If he was invisible that would make his jokester crap ten times better.

So I checked the book for truth potions to find out if that abomination was really my brother. "Aha!" I found the potion slot where the potion is supposed to be, but there was no potion. Had someone taken it? Maybe dad? Maybe Shanti? That has to be it; Shanti snuck in my room and had taken it. "So that's why he's been acting so weird, he stole the potion. And maybe he's planning to do something with it." I started talking to myself. I don't know why, but I can think better than usual when I think out loud.

"I suppose I'll formulate it myself," Once more I thought aloud. Then I continued with reading the formula "1 pint of dragon's blood, 4 echidna eggs, 1 ounce of invisible ink, and grandma's help."

What? Was I reading this right? "Grandma's help? Dragon's blood? What is an echidna? Does invisible ink even exist? What is this crap? Doesn't sound like there is a likely chance of this being a truth potion to me, it's more of a death potion" Oh well, I wrote it down anyway and stuffed it in my pocket.

Knock Knock Went the door.

"Your time machine is here!" That annoying robotic thing that claims he is Shanti yelled.

"Yeah whatever, just go fix it up or something. I need to study for some sort of test" I wish he never came to my

door. I'm not used to telling lies. Well, I guess a little white lie here and there won't hurt. Speaking of wishes, I never exactly found out what my wish was while in feudal Japan. Oh well.

Chime. By my amazement, a hologram version of my grandma slowly appeared from the book.

"Hello darling," My grandma said looking as young as ever with her long black hair and dimples on her cheeks. She looked as though she was rehabilitated. "I haven't seen you in a long time. You look so eminent. What took you so long to summon me?" Yeah, as you'll soon find out I got most of my vocabulary from my grandma. For some reason we use are vocabulary randomly; as far as the big words are concerned, but you'll find that out soon enough.

"*Summon* you? What do you mean 'summon'? Grandma... are you dead?"

"Most certainly no; especially since I'm talking to you, but boy o' boy, you ask a heck of a lot of questions. By the way, where are you? Usually I can poof myself right out of the book. Are you still in this universe?"

"Yeah, I think so. Why would you ask that?"

"It's a long story... really..."

"I have time."

"Well, if you were to be in a different universe, then I wouldn't be able to poof myself out and greet you properly. So anyway, why did you summon me?"

"I *summoned* you because there is something weird about Shanti."

“Is he still a nuisance to you? Well, if he is, tell him grandma is very angry with him.”

“No not that, he’s changed. A little too much, so much I can’t take it.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well first off, he’s nice.”

“I don’t understand, isn’t that supposed to be a good thing?”

“Not if I know Shanti, there’s nothing good about him. Whatsoever.”

“Ok, whatever, that’s not essential right now. I need to know where you are.”

“Planet Earth of course, I never really left.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m positive... more than ever.”

“So then... Have you been exposed to a teleporter?”

“Now that you mention it, I did teleport from my house, to Feudal Japan, to this place which is supposedly my house. Why? What does that have to do with me not being on Earth?”

“You see, if you teleport, you’re still on planet Earth, but in another dimension, possibly everything will be opposite from what they once were. Who knows? But one thing I do know is that one change can have a big effect”

when in a different dimension. Like if the sky was purple instead of blue; the change could be that people could panic, spend more time staring at the sky and get cancer from the sun rays, or the atmosphere may be so thick and full of carbon dioxide that the sun doesn't penetrate anymore. And so on..."

"That explains a lot about what happened to Pencil neck, but what about dad?" I thought to myself.

"I'll tell you what. How about you disregard our conversation we had and do some research. Observe the changes that have taken place, while doing that get a time machine. Go to the time of 1201 to pick me up. After that go to the time of 2010 to pick up your cousin Carmen. Last, but not least, go home to the time of 2050."

"I'll try grandma. Good-Bye," then the hologram disappeared. From then I knew that I had a super log journey. I had to make the "truth serum" to get information from Shanti and maybe dad if I have enough time. I had to pick up Grandma and my cousin. After that was all complete I could finally go home and rest.

I sauntered downstairs to Shanti.

"The time machine is ready... Randy," Shanti blurted out. The time machine was unobtrusive compared to the teleporter.

"Could you create invisible ink and obtain 4 echidna eggs for me?" I asked Shanti for a favor.

"Sure, do you want to go with me so I'll get the right ones?"

"I guess, what's the worst that could happen?"



The Hunt



“Journey takes only a day..”

Shanti started packing up some unnecessary stuff like lemon, ink, mom's perfume, dad's cologne, binoculars, and a net. None of that stuff seems to be stuff you can catch eggs with. In fact, you don't need *anything* to get eggs, for the exception of your hands, of course.

“Why are you packing that junk,” I asked.

“Very useful,” Shanti responded. And for some reason it seemed like Shanti was getting less descriptive and talks more like a robot than before.

“Useful how?”

“Lemons stings hungry predators' eyes, ink blinds them, perfume erases our scent as long as it doesn't get on us, same goes for cologne, and net captures prey”

“Predator? Prey? Who are we hunting and who is hunting us? Besides, who said we were going on some adventure?”

“Faith.”

Umm... sure, ok. I didn't dare continue that meaningless argument. Then I decided to pack genuine stuff like food, sleeping bags, and rope. I changed my mind about not needing anything to get eggs. I forgot we had to go to a

different continent to get those eggs, which will take forever to get. A journey right after another, I guess.

“Ready?” Shanti asked.

“Yes. I even packed extra clothes.” I replied.

“What for? Journey takes only a day.”

“You lie. We have to go all the way to Australia, that’s where Echidna’s live. It’s their habitat, home of the weirdest animals on Earth, at least in my opinion they are.”

“Using a plane only takes a day. Hunt takes more.”

“I thought you said it’ll only take one day, freaking hypocrite. Besides, how are you going to get the plane? Plane cost money.” Darn it, now I’m talking like him.

“Journey takes only a day. 24.4 hours total. Round to 24 hours mean only one day.”

“Dude, robots are supposed to be smart. 24.4 means a day and 24 minutes, there’s no way you can get eggs in 24 minutes, let alone find the animal. Whatever, we are wasting time; I’m not trying to have this conversation right now. You’re starting to get on my nerves!”

Then I trudged to the front door with the stuff, with Shanti right behind me. I swiftly opened the door. The door opened so fast and soundless I didn’t even notice mom standing at the door. I guess you can say she was unperceived. She scared me for a second. Then started to give me the creeps, like Shanti used to do in the past.

“You came all this way from Norway to stay this time or visit this time?” I asked mom.

"That is a distinct possibility, or I could have come to break your hearts and leave you in despair," Mom said in a confusing way.

Ok forget the part that I said about everyone who talks to me is annoying. I made a new rule. Anyone who flat out confuses me is a jerk. Not that I'm saying my mom is a jerk. I'm saying that her actions were jerk-ish and she was acting ten times stranger than Shanti was. So bizarre, I would say she was possessed.

"Just kidding," mom said with a smirk on her face, I knew that she was lying between her teeth.

"So why did you come all this way. You came to see me, your favorite son, right?"

"No, you do not know what it is like to have to work 24 hours, no rest, no sleep, and never see or speak to your kids again. It makes you want to go crazy! So where is your dad? So can end my long years work and give him a spark of my fury. Vanish all the undead. No one shall survive. I am fed up with life. Why can't I veg out on the couch? Why can't I become a fat and lazy hog? Why can't I enjoy my love life? Why can't I be free? I am tired and cannot breathe. I want to be lazy. I want to be stupid. I want to be in Special Ed and get some special treatment. It's all about me, not you, or anyone else. Go away or feel my wrath! I will hunt you down. Go away; I don't want to see you anymore."

Her little speech made me fluster. Could this be my mom? I felt my mother's pain even though she wasn't my real mother. I too, know how it feels to be ignored, mistreated, lonely, and forgotten. I felt it ever since I was born up until I got into this parallel universe. It took me up until now to realize what my grandma was saying was true.

Anyone who caused me the most problems, becomes the least, “anything in the middle disappears”, not only does Pencilneck disappear, but so does Dad. And if my mom caused me the least problems what about all the animals and people I don’t know? Why me, of all people? Why is it that this parallel universe seems to center around me? I don’t even begin to understand how this universe is parallel if almost everything is different. Wait about 10 years and nothing will be the same...nothing at all. Will there be more problems? The only option is to get away from mom, lay low somewhere until I figure out who’s good and who’s bad, personality-wise. So I ran out of the door tugging Shanti, trying to tell him to “come on”. It took him a while because he was shocked of mom’s appearance, but only I knew she was talking to me directly.

When I walked out of the door it was a family reunion. All my family members that I knew were outside ready to attack, with their pitchforks and torches; moaning, as though they were zombies in some type of zombie-movie.

“There is another way,” Shanti said. Honestly that was the smartest thing I heard him say all day, it’s like he totally stop pretending to be the robot he once was. “No more games. They’re after you. I had to trick you on a hunt to get them closer to you. It was all mom’s idea. As your brother I will tell you the way. Exit this world the way you came in and it should take you to the place you were before you got here. That is the only way. You must go. Go now. Before it is too late!”

I took Shanti’s words as advice for escape; an elusive escape. Besides if it was a trick why would he trick me now of all times? I ran back to my room to get the book, not once did I encounter mom. So I grasped the book as tight as my fragile little hands could hold it. Then by my surprise, the door suddenly shut. The lock was on the inside, where I can

easily unlock it, but each time I tried, it would shock me with electrical static waves. I knew from that, that the hunt was over and that there would be no time to get the time machine. No time to get grandma and Carmen. No time to go home. No time to be free. I failed. I am too late.



Back in Time



“... nothing left but a showdown between me and the book...”

I paced back and forth through my room hoping to think of a solution. As I paced, my legs began to get tired and they felt as if they would break like little sticks. Mom always said I should gain weight, but I thought I was fairly big, just not as big as dad. Soon I got aggravated with the fact that my legs hurt badly and I had no option but to think harder for a plan. Not too hard, or the plan will turn mean, like my pranks toward Shanti. It's nice to get time off from all that.

“Exit the way I came in,” I began talking to myself. “How did I summon grandma? Maybe I was reading a spell that required her help.”

Then I opened the book in search of a spell that required grandma's help. Tada! I found it.

“How to Summon sync Power?” I read the passage out loud, “Mix goblin fang with your saliva and eat it. Eat it? How disgusting! How dreadful is that.”

I closed the book and wrote down the directions. 1.... 2.... 3.... poof! Out came grandma's hologram.

“Ciao youngster, I haven't seen you... well, since this afternoon,” Grandma responded to the wakeup call. “I see

your learning to use the sync power. You don't need to do the spell; the power is already in you. That's what allows you to teleport without your matter getting all splattered. Oh my, I just made my 999,999,999,999th rhyme. Let me do it again. You do not need the sync power or you'll have to take a shower. I know for sure you cannot take a shower beyond this hour, for you will have mastered the sync power and does not need a castle tower to master the power, but concentration will get you through the hour." She flattered herself as she rhymed...horribly.

"Grandma, Stop! How do I exit this world the way I came in if I'm trapped in a room?" I yelled at her.

"I'm sorry there is interference in the dimension there; something must be interfering, something evil. I must go now, sorry. Bye, love you." Then grandma's hologram vanished.

Thump went the walls of the room as my mother faded through them and came towards my way.

"Silly child, you cannot run and you certainly are bad at hiding. Go anywhere I will find you. Guess what? I'm going to rip you apart with my Crescent-moon Staff of the night."

The "crescent-moon Staff of the night," looked similar to a sickle attached to a power pole. The blade was shiny as crystal and the pole part was jet black symbolizing the night. The staff had to be about 8 feet long because she tripped me with it pretty fast, and I wasn't even running.

"Did the ground break your fall," she started speaking very faint by this point now. "Oh yes, I can feel the power coming to me as the day goes by! You have exactly 5 minutes left..."

The staff began to glow brighter and brighter. I could tell that it was absorbing power from the moon. As it did so, it made a chiming sound. I could also hear her chanting some words. She began to change shape. First she began to grow hairy back, then her whole body. Soon after, she was a gigantic were-wolf. She was 12 feet wide, 32 feet tall, about 800 pounds I'm guessing. Thrashing about, the beast that was once my mom tore down the entire house until there was nothing left. Her powers were so intense it made me feel nauseous. Everything has been broken, nothing left but a showdown between me and the book, versus a monster.

Was this world beginning to turn into the one I just left? Or has it gotten worse? "Slice" was the sound as the blue-haired warrior I saw in the other world; his name was Hokushi, as I last recall. He sliced my mom into pieces in the matter of seconds. It was so amazing that I was stunned and did not move.

"I bet you thought I wasn't going to rescue you, didn't you? Well, don't just stand there, say something." Hokushi scolded me.

"Do you have a time machi...?" Sakura came running and interrupted my speech.

"Wait up!" she started running faster. "Hey you're that kid I saw earlier. What were you doing spellbound in a barrier of darkness of some sort?"

"I don't know." I said gently, soft, and perplexed.

"Where are you heading?"

"Home."

“Where’s that?”

“In the future.”

“In the future? I live in the future too, what a coincidence.”

“Do you have a time machine then?”

“Yes, an old lady gave it to me yesterday. I have no use for it. I already have a way of getting home. Do you want it or something?”

“Yes.”

“Well you can have it.”

Sakura had handed me the time machine. It was the exact one that my brother was building. Now everything was put in order again. Everything was put into place again, I can finally go home. No worries. No brothers. No mothers. And most certainly, there are no werewolves.

“Thank you Sakura,” I told her as I was entering the time machine.

“Have a nice journey. I hope you return home.” Sakura told me.

“I know I will,” I responded optimistically.



Back on Track



“Come out, come out wherever you are.”

As the time-machine dropped me off at the time of 1201 the streets didn't seem as frightening as the previous time. There were people all around watching me, making sure they spotted my every step. I was a little embarrassed and noticed a pouch hanging from out of my jeans pocket. I stuffed it into my jeans as quickly as I could. They seemed to be a little less observant as I tucked it in.

“What strange people... I thought this was the time of 1201!” I spotted a market store a street light away and started walking towards it “Oh well.”

It was early in the morning, unlike the future's other dimension where it was always night, but when I walked into the market it was crowded with people. As I walked into the store, I saw the price of a banana and it was \$20. That must have been a rare banana, I thought. So I decided to go shopping for some “past” stuff. I got a basket and put the bananas gently in the basket.

An hour later I then got carried away when I was pretending to be mom and buying a bunch of healthy food products before she was possessed by something evil. Like celery, broccoli, steak, apples, grapefruit, garlic, onion, and oh my god, I found 4 echidna eggs. I grabbed those too, of course.

I got bored with being mom so I went over in the electronics department and saw that it didn't exist. Completely wiped off the face of the store. No video games, no iPods, no cell phones, no nothing. I forgot that I had been in the time of 1201 and that there is nothing special in this time. "Why would it be marked electronics if this is the past?"

I started to hear some mild yelling coming from across the lanes. Then I saw two figures darting towards me. "Stop that thief! He has come from a different land! He is violating the queen's rules!"

"Thief? I'm sorry you have the wrong prospector."

"Prospector? Is he trying to be funny?" the malevolent one who seemed legitimate started to speak. "Do you usually use words that you do not mean? If so, then I've never seen someone more full of irony than you are."

"Only when I'm being accused of a crime I didn't commit. Besides I haven't even left the store to be labeled as a thief yet."

"You're not being accused, you're being defiant. And what makes you think we are accusing you? I hope you know we are not accusing you. Whoever said we accused people? I don't accuse people. Stop accusing me of accusing people."

"Well, first off you kind of gave it away that you were *accusing* me when you yelled out 'THEIF! STOP THAT THEIF' and you don't even know me to justify whether or not I'm a thief."

"Have you been on any drugs of some sort," the despiteful yet miserable one decided to speak, thus building

the antagonism.

"Look, all I want is for you to stop harassing me, oh, and this so-called queen of yours, I'd like you to take me to her, I'd like to give her a piece of my mind."

"Are you sure? I mean like really sure? Me and sager only take people to her to get excommunicated or something..."

"Or even possibly executed... that is my personal favorite," Sager cut the other one off. "Only I-Sager and Diggs can go up to see her for our own purposes, not some back-talking little runt."

"Runt? Wow, cuz you made a lot of sense there. Stop procrastinating and take me to her, immediately." I slightly incriminated myself.

Sager and Diggs ignored this time around; pulled out a wand. The wand was short and stubby. It was dull and ugly. It had a button on it with the same symbol on it that the book my grandma gave to me did, you know, the one with the magic spells in it. They pressed the button and...wham! We were outside a castle that was so humongous.

The castle was so big I could hardly see where the top ended. On the castle, there was the same symbol as on the wand and book. I began to get a little more curious about that symbol.

"Do you, for any cause, know what that symbol means?" I asked Sager, the wiser one of the two.

"It's the name of the queen." He responded very sharp and quickly.

“Wow! You don’t have to say it like that. What is her name?”

“No one is allowed to speak her name.” Sager said in a more slowly and lazily manner so I can comprehend.

“We have to leave you here; the rest of the journey is on your own.” Diggs spoke.

“Do you want us to bring your shop items to you? Later, like in t-minus 5 seconds” Sager asked nicely. In which he perplexed me because they just had a total mood-swing. First I was labeled as a thief and now they offer to let me go, not only that, but let me have my stuff for free.

“Sure, now when you say t-minus, would that be considered fast or slow?”

“Extremely fast, so fast...” Sager magically made my groceries appear.

“I guess now you’re the one using the words,” I grabbed the basket. “I better get going before I get off track again. Is there anything I should be aware of?”

“Yes, avoid all traps by staying on the right side of the hall at all times.”

“Thanks, you know this feels sort of like the wizard of Oz except I’m leaving my acquaintances behind.

Sager and Diggs nodded heavily. And I was on a new mission. The mission to the queen, what an honor...

...after staying on the right side through the whole time I finally reached the royal throne. The throne was kind of big, like a fat person was sitting on it.

“Ohhhh Queeeeen!!!! Come out, come out wherever you are. You know, I’m a big fan of yours.” I called out to the queen.

“I know!” someone answered from behind me. It was kind of scary, how shallow the voice was. Then I felt a sudden shrivel down my spine as something touched my shoulder. Not to say that I have experienced it before, but it felt like death was upon me.



Unexpected



“...do whatever it takes to become more powerful...”

I turned around as quick as lightening could strike metal. As I turned around the hand lightly reclined off of my shoulder. By my surprise, the person that had spooked me was an old lady. Not just an old lady, but the queen. Surprisingly, the queen looked just like my grandma, except for the excessive body fat, the mole, and the long pointy nose of course. You know, now that I think about it, she reminds me more of the witch from the wizard of oz, except for the excessive fat of course.

“So you’re the queen,” I spoke to her boldly as ever. “It’s kind of strange how you look like and exact copy of my grandma. I would say you were her, but it’s kind of hard to trust people these days, being that my mom tried to kill me, my brother is madly nice, and two strange people said that I was... um... whatever they said I was. It’s kinda hard to think over a lot of stress and conviction. From now on I am going to trust conviction and make friends with everyone that I see. I will only see people as enemies but I won’t attack until they make the first move. So, what will your move be?”

“Boy you sure do talk a lot, I am your grandma. If you don’t remember your grandma then that’s too bad. So how did you manage to get past the traps without a crew of some sort?” The queen asked, making her first move a positive one.

“Uh, what...oh, no no no. I travel alone. Like I said before, you can trust conviction, especially in this world.”

“You *had* to have had *some* sort of help, you don’t seem to be tired or have a scratch on you.”

“Was I supposed to?”

“No, but it’s weird that you don’t”

“Ok, I had a *little* help; it was from Sager and Diggs.”

“No wonder... oh! Do you still have the time-machine you used to get here?”

“Yes, as a matter of fact I got 4 echidna eggs.”

“Ok, that’s beyond the point; before we leave we must stop the war that is going to happen.”

“War? What war? With whom? And why is this time so civilized like our time?”

“We are underground. In the deep blue sea where the water is above us. The sky here is just an illusion. I would stay in the outside, but humans haven’t exactly grown enough to handle change. They would freak out and have a heart attack, possibly altering time. Therefore, we cannot interact with the uncivilized humans. This plan is a good plan, I assure you. With this plan, when this time arrives to our time we will multiply the human race by 4 times and half of them will have magic on their side. Maybe that is a bad thing. Magic has a limit as do life, future humans may misuse the power and something terrible might happen. Speaking of terrible, the war with the Animal Morphanians is much worse than the misuse of power.”

“Who are they?” Up to this point I am so confused, I still wonder if I am still alive, or is this some sort of dream that I am having right now.

“They are despicable, foul, unordered creatures that dwell on the other side of this land, which have the ability morph into any animal, thanks to a curse that I was working on and accidentally caused havoc.” Curse? Is she serious? I’m guessing she is a witch... yea that’s definitely got to be it.

“Why are you going into war with them?”

“It’s because of power. When one group feels the other is more powerful than the other, then they start to envy the others and do whatever it takes to become more powerful than the other. Otherwise, wars would not exist. Nobody can compromise so that they can share their power and join forces, ah, no, they must fight!”

“Do we *have* to be in the war?”

“Yes silly, we *have* to be in the war. We are not like the lazy presidents who start the war, but do not attend to it. They panic over it. T wants you to remember in life that what you start is your responsibility to finish. Not the armies, not your family, not your friends, but you.”

“So I guess you really are Queen of...”

“Oh I’m sorry. Not once have I thought of naming this land. Would you like to help?”

“Ok. Sure” I jumped to that, that’s got to be the most exciting thing I heard all day. “But it’s got to be something audacious, numinous, gracious, and atrocious.”

“Why atrocious?”

“It gives weary travelers a petrified sentiment.”

“You seriously think too much. Why can’t it just be a name of a person?”

“Well, that person *obviously* has to be the quality of the four things that I just named.”

“Not all the way, but I got a pretty good feeling he or she is getting very close.”

“Who is that person?”

“You are!”

“So the name of this place is going to be Randy? No way! That is the lameest name ever.”

“Do you not like your name?”

“I love it! It’s just missing that actiony-heroic tone.”

“So I declare by this day, the name of this place: Randy!”

“Aren’t you going to tell the people?”

“Perhaps another day, I’ll get Sager and Diggs to do it later”

“Weren’t you just saying a while ago that once you start something it is your duty to finish it? Hypocrite.”

“I am, I have to tell Sager and Diggs about it, right? Besides, you can’t tell the city, they wouldn’t listen to a

word you say. Unless you're the queen, of course."

"How are we going to win the war?"

"We are going to get the people that you have met and decide which ones we want to bring back to help us."

"How are you going to do that?"

"By using the machine I made when I traveled here. It still works, hopefully. If it doesn't then I'll just lose the war and that power that we have."

"Hopefully? What do you mean hopefully? I came all this way just for you to give up? I don't think so! You better get that machine working, I don't care if you have to go all the way back to Yuri, but we *will* win this war! Losing is not an option. Come on grandma, don't just give up now. I'm counting on you."

"Well if it means that much to you then I'll do it."

"That's what I'm talking about!"

Pin Pals or Cohorts?



“...My only protection, Hokushi”

Grandma had spin in front of me so fast she looked like a flat surface of white lines in front of me. Then she stopped - causing me to become dizzy from the lines that formed from the spin.

“It’s best not to watch! Who do you want to bring first?”

“I want to bring forth Hokushi; his persistence can get us to win easily.”

“Hokushi?” My grandma froze to think as if she knew him for years.

“Yes, Hokushi. Why? Why is his name so shocking?”

“Just to make sure we are talking about the same one, let me ask a few questions.”

“Go right ahead.”

“Does he have black and blue hair?”

“Yeah.”

“Does he have Togashi?”

“Um...” Grandma puzzled me. I never heard of “Togashi” before. “What is that?”

“A sword that wields, ancient and powerful powers forged from a power-hungry priest”

“Yeah, I guess he did.”

“Ok, does he wear a blue-sleeveless shirt with a dog-collar on his arm?”

“That’s Hokushi alright.”

“I don’t understand... He died... according to the tablet he died before I was even born... how could you have possibly met him? Oh well, if you want him here...”

Then grandma took out the rounded pocket size version of the time machine, which had a light switch on it. She flicked the light switch on and Hokushi appeared on the platform behind us that I never noticed until now... In fact I'm sure it was never there.

“What the...” I gasped for a second there and continued “Hey grandma was that platform always there?” She gave me the silent treatment and chuckled “I hate when you do that”. I'm one-hundred percent sure it was never there and that this house and my grandma are full of surprises.

“What the hell!” Hokushi exclaimed, he was just as surprised and perplexed as I was. “Where the hell am I?”

“Hey Hokushi, remember me, you saved my life.”

“Damn it all, I save a persons life and get kidnapped the next moment”

“Whaaaa.... he saved your life?” my grandma interrupted, she made it seem shocking and more serious

than it really was. "But you died? 60 years ago!"

"I died? Are you loosing it? You old lady!" Hokushi retorted in a snobby snappy attitude. I'm seriously starting to have second thoughts about this guy.

"Yes you died, in the great battle with Renaiku the great"

"I never died... I almost died... if it wasn't for some old lady who gave us a time-machine"

"Old lady... could it be? Could it be that my mother helped them?"

"Umm... what are you guys talking about?" I included myself in the conversation. "Are you talking about that fight that I saw you in, against the guy with the red kimono and red eyes?"

"You were there? Kid, you are everywhere aren't you?" Hokushi retorted. I find it unique how that was how everything all started. How that was the very first thing that happened. The old lady? I don't know what they are talking about, but I do remember Sakura saying that an old lady gave her the time machine that she gave me. Could it be that it was me that altered time. The wish from Slithe. He made me go to the alternate reality of home, and in the process and old lady helped Hokushi and Sakura escape to the place that I was to save me from my mother. Whatever the case may be... I'm starting to understand more and more about what is going on, but this whole war thing is just so random. Being that I am in an alternate reality, I'm having second guesses as to what my grandma's motives really are. She did mention that in this time zone, everything is the opposite of what they really are, and since my mom was nice in my time, she was evil in this one. So if my grandma was

nice in my time then she must be evil in this one. But I can't make any assumptions because if everything was completely opposite my mom wouldn't have the same memories as she did in this time. I guess I have to see what happens...

"Randy! Randy!" I was in "la-la" land during my whole analysis, but my grandma snapped me out of it. "Who's the next person you want to bring."

"Sakura!" I can't have Hokushi without Sakura! So then my grandma did her thing. "Slithe" She hesitated but continued to bring him back.

"Is that it?" My grandma asked.

"Yup, sorry that's all the people I can think of..." Then something else had came to mind with the whole summoning-poofy-poofy thing. "Hey grandma, if you could just make people appear on this little platform, why didn't you just make me appear, instead of making me travel down the way. Also can you poof some well known strong fighters or something?"

"What are you talking about? I didn't make you come here. The tripped was unplanned"

"Are you serious? So are you trying to tell me that wasn't you who was in the book?"

"Book? What book?" Ok. So I am really confused now, but this does arose further question that explains even more about what exactly is going on.

"This book..." I fiddled around "wait... where is it? I had it somewhere." I had a flashed back to when I was attacked by my mother. I must have dropped the book when I was

back there. This lady... I know for a fact that she is not my real grandma. The grandma in the book told me I was in another dimension that means that grandma was not in this dimension, and this grandma is. I'd better watch out for this lady... she just might transform into a wolf creature, my only protection, Hokushi.



The Gather Up



“Alchemists believe that it grants unimaginable power.”

My Grandma called out “Enrique!” Then a sand-toned pangolin came rolling about. Finally coming to a stop in front of my Grandma. He was dressed in a bartender suit. I'm guessing he was a servant. If it weren't for that last day of school I would have never heard of a pangolin and assumed it was some magical creature of some sort. My grandma began whispering to him “I want you to find this book, a magical book with a lady in it that looks like me and burn it.” The pangolin thing nodded and rolled away. Then Sager and Diggs decided to show up.

“The stone warriors are ready for battle” Sager and Diggs spoke simultaneously. I swear they are twins; they do look kind of similar being that they both are elf creatures. With their elf hats, elf ears, elf height, elf everything.

“So these are the warriors...” Sager spoke by himself this time around.

“They look like trash... they need battle armor if they are going to fight” Diggs spoke this time, just as cocky as ever. So they took out their little wand things and... Poof.... we all received battle armor... everyone except me that is. Hokushi received a jet battle-full body suit. It looked awesome. Sakura received pink bangles and braces, so many that they completely covered her legs and arms, And

in her arms was a shiny bow; around her shoulder was a compartment full of bows... she looked like a futuristic version of those medieval warriors with the bows. Slithe just received golden claws... they looked sharp; I guess they would come in handy if he needed to scratch a lot; otherwise his claws would become dull and render it useless.

"Show them to their rooms." Then we all began to leave, and that's when my grandma stopped me "Randy, oh you will be coming with me."

So I followed my grandma up the stairs. I find it surprising how many halls a castle can have, even halls up stairs. Halls in between halls of other halls. Almost like a city full of halls. The funny part is, all the halls look exactly the same so it would be easy for you to get lost. So we went down the hall. To a double door. In which lead to the balcony; in which we entered. We began to talk some more.

"I know that this may be a rush to you, but this war is really important." She began the start of a lecture, lectures always annoyed me but this time I was up for it. I needed this lecture. "Those darn animal morphanians are collecting all the sacred items. There are five total. Two time machines, two teleporters, and an adapter that allows all of them to connect without defects."

"What happens when they connect?" I asked.

"When all five connect it grants the power to alter the fabric of time to their advantage. They can control all the dimensions and the different times in which each dimension holds. So imagine if there was a sorcerer's stone in every dimension..."

"What's a sorcerer's stone?"

“Alchemists believe that it grants unimaginable power. And that is just from one stone, imagine millions of them, the animal morphanians would be invincible. I need to stop them from collecting all of them. They found out that I have one of the time machines and a teleporter.” That's funny because I have a time machine and a teleporter, but there is no way in hell that I'm going to let her get a hold of them. I don't trust this lady one bit. Everything that she says is with sincerity, but what happens when she wins that war?

“Are you sure you're not the one after them, and the animal morphanians aren't the ones trying to stop you?” I knew I shouldn't have said that but I couldn't have helped it any longer. “Besides, why are you just now telling me this, from what I know, they wanted to fight out of jealousy, and now they have a reason?”

She gave out a smirk and said “What are you trying to say?”

“I just said it, I don't trust you, and you are using us to get power.”

She grabbed me by the chin and said “boy you sure do think allot”

Later that day, well it was already late, but much later in time, Slithe had pulled me aside, to his room. I liked how we all got our own rooms to ourselves, that feeling felt amazing; finally being alone after all this craziness; another hectic day and my body will give out on me. He locked the door. “Yeah Slithe, What is it?”

“It's about this whole war thing, we must talk,” Slithe seemed really serious, again I must put my own pesky feelings aside and listen out. This time Slithe had taken on a

human form. "I'm able to read the future, past, and present very well, but there is something you must know."

"Um, yeah... do go on."

"This lady that you believe is your grandma, are you 100% sure?"

"Well... now that you mention it, not really. She's so distant from me, like a total stranger. She never claimed to be my grandmother so maybe you are right, she is not my grandmother."

"According to the dragon code I am not allowed to give out future outcomes but I can warn you, keep a close eye for her."

"That I will do."



War



“I did quite notice Sager and Diggs sneaking up on us.”

Part one

As the sun began to rise signaling a new day, I could feel a nice, warm, soothing aroma in the air. I knew that today would be the day. The day for war. I also felt at peace in a melancholy way, began mentally waning away. Lying in bed as an insomniac I laid there motionlessly. I finally brought myself together, unwittingly standing up, slowly crossing the hall, as I slowly entered the balcony. Looking over the balcony at the sunset in such a pensive manner, the mood was sullen; down across the plain I could see a sparkle, like a reflection of light from a shiny object. The light shone from about ten miles away, yet it was poignant to my eyes. About ten minutes later it came closer and closer, I could see an army of creatures heading towards the castle. But an army of what? Could this be...? Has the war begun? Closer and closer they came becoming more macroscopic as time passed on. I could see that they appeared to be pudgy, over-sized groundhogs in shiny battle armor. Wait... What's that... a sound began to play. I'm sure it was a horn. Someone must have sounded the alarm. My grandma touched my shoulder from behind me.

“It is time,” she began “The war has begun”.

“OK,” I retorted in an obsequious manner “I am ready”.

We all flippantly went to the battleground. As all the warriors became ready for battle, the horn stopped... all types of sound seized... all but the sound of the wind. Then... everyone began charging about. The animal morphanians began to morph simultaneously and repetitively. Going from a groundhog to a charging elephant knocking down our warriors, then turning into a lion with claws cutting down our warriors into shreds.

I could see Slithe flying above us with great acclivity, swooping down and clawing all the morphanians in his path. Slithe appeared to be invincible, using his hot dragon-fire, burning many of the morphanians. Then I saw Hokushi and his sword Togashi, slashing about, blood squirting everywhere, he looked as though he was having fun on his little bloody rampage, swinging his sword and moving his body like a cyclone; literally. Then on Sakura's side, she was standing on top of a giant boulder; shooting her arrows at the morphanians with delicacy and grace. Sager and Diggs spending their time using magic with style. They flipped, jumped, and leaped as they used their wand to poofed all the morphanians away. My grandma was nowhere in sight. And as for me, I was given nothing, but forced to use the "sync" power, in I had no idea or preparation for so I spent a majority of my time running and hiding behind the warriors as they were as useless as I was, being shredded to pieces.

No matter how many times we slashed and slaughtered them, more and more kept on coming as if there was an endless amount of them. And just when I thought we had the advantage, the morphanians kept morphing into more and more stronger animals. Correction... I meant to say dinosaurs, the most lethal kind of animals ever made, there soul purpose... to kill. A majority of the morphanians turned into pterodactyls and triceratops. The morphanian way in the back turned into a Tyrannosaurus Rex. I'm guessing he

was the leader. The pterodactyls began taking down Slithe, he collapsed, falling to the ground. The lead morphanian came rushing toward our way. Crushing its comrades in the process. One of the warriors protecting me was penetrated with the horn of the rogue triceratops. After he killed the warrior it glared at me. Then he began to charge. I closed my eyes tight with fear. Put my hand out to a halt position. The sound dropped once more, everything felt as if time suddenly froze. Seconds later... Boom!

I opened my eyes and wondered why I wasn't dead. All I could see was a bluish-white light; it came from my hand. But how? What was this? Is this the famous "sync" power my grandma kept referring to? Suddenly i felt empowered. I mean who wouldn't if they had a great power like that? It felt like i was a super hero of some sort. I began to do it again and again, disintegrating hundreds of morphanians with every blow. The leader still charging, but towards me, closer and closer. So i decided to do it again with all the spiritual energy I had. The entire field glowed with a white-blue light. All the morphanians were dead. The field became a giant carrion of dross and dead corpses. But where was Slithe? Did something happen to him? Did i accidentally blow him to smithereens?



Part two

Suddenly I saw my grandma flying in the air on some type of disk. The disk was flat and panel-like; it was uniquely futuristic with its sleek design. I could tell she was heading towards the palace of the Morphanians on the other side of the plain, in which we could not see due to its distance. As she passed by she laughed wickedly. "Hahahahahaaa", almost like a witch who just got what she wanted; in which she did. Why was I not surprised? I could see this coming, a total set up. I wanted to have faith in her, but I guess Slithe

was right. Whatever the case may be I have to stop her. Before she continues with her wicked plan of changing the fabric of time.

Time was always something that confused me, with all the dimensions with different outcomes and stuff. And how within every mili-second a new dimension is created. Apparently this dimension was far different from my own, sure everything looks the same, but looks can be deceiving. And looks aren't even all that same either. Now that I know that the time machines, and teleporters exist, all the dimensions feel more connected, a connection that shouldn't happen. I can feel it in my spine that something bad is going to happen. Every time I watch a movie about time-machines, something bad always does happen. With all of it leading to a rip in the fabric of time.

"So what are we going to do? We have to stop her! Before she gets a hold of the all the five great machines!" Or whatever they are called. Seriously, we need to make a nickname for those darn things, every time I want to mention them I space out. Oh well "five great machines" it is!

"Huh?" Hokushi said, I could tell that he was confused on what was going on. If I were in his shoes I would be too. I mean, it's not like he was there when me and Slithe had our conversation.

"She tricked us into going into this war just so she could get the five great machines in order to alter the fabric of time to find sources of power to strengthen her."

"I know that part; I just don't understand why people are so obsessed with becoming the most powerful being ever to exist."

I did quite notice Sager and Diggs sneaking up on us. I assumed they were back-stabbed as well as we were. But nope, they were in on it as well. "Understand this!" Sager wave his wand. I could see a cold, icy, frost-like mist approaching us from the contents of his wand. Reminds me of a cartoon I saw ages ago. They were like dry ice, only they had a bluish tone. So it went passed me, barely touching my face as my cheek began to freeze solid. The ice looked as if it was targeted at Hokushi, but he dodged it of course with his awesome reflexes, the only problem is when he dodged it hit Sakura. When it hit Sakura, she froze solid, her entire body. Hokushi was enraged, I hardly cared about Sakura until now, she was always invisible to me. Hardly ever talking, hardly showing emotion, hardly worrying, hardly does anything. Hokushi began charging at them. They continued doing it again and again, but Hokushi was so good he dodged them all. And of course now that I have powers I'm not going to just stand here. So I did it again, channeled the sync power. I could feel the power guzzling in the palm of my hand. I shaped it into a sword. And Hokushi and I began charging about with our swords, simultaneously, cutting them into pieces. You know? Sager and Diggs are powerful, they just lack speed and stamina, in which Hokushi has a lot of. But now that that is over, here comes the drama. What the hell are we going to do about Sakura?

I could see it in Hokushi's eyes, he didn't want to leave her, neither did I, but if we are going to save the world and eventually get me home, then we are going to have to come back for her later. But how do I tell him? How do I tell him that in a way that won't piss him off? You know how people can get when they are emotional.

"Sorry Hokushi, but we must move on. I know that you really liked her and that she meant a lot to you but..."

"You don't understand!" Hokushi began yelling at me.

“I do...”

“No you don’t! You have no idea what she meant to me, she was my everything, my sister. And to lose a family member? That hurts, it hurts a lot. So how could some want-to-be like you ever understand that?”

“I understand because, I too, have lost a lot. I lost my brother, I lost my mom, which tried to kill me and would have succeeded if you didn’t show up, I lost my grandmother, who is going to try to take over the world if we don’t stop each other, and I lost a friend, Slithe was the one who got me here and apparently was my only way out, without him, I’m stuck in this world forever. So I do know what it feels like, but you have to understand, I need you, I need you to help me stop my grandmother, and when you do that, hopefully we can find a way to bring back Sakura and Slithe.”

“I refuse! Never! I will never go! You’re on your own, I never asked for your help, yet I helped you, time after time, I am sick and tired of helping you. If it wasn’t for you Sakura would be alive right now. Now go! Go before I have to kill you!” If you asked me, those sounded like fighting words. I’d gladly beat him to a pulp, but not now though; I need to stop my grandmother. This whole experience up till now makes me feel like I’m in some kind of epical story. The epic of Randy; that’s what I’d call it!



Lucky Escape



“mwuhahahahaaa”

After about 5 hours of walking, I finally entered the palace of the morphanians. You wouldn't believe how many statues there was. Millions! Statue after statue. After glaring at all the statues I finally entered the palace walls. Within the walls I could see two dark shadowy figures. As they approached me closer and closer I could see that one of them was grandma. The other wore a black hooded-cape and he or she's face was covered so that I couldn't see it. By this time the sun got low, the light increasing become more red, and shadows got longer. Dawn was beginning to approach.

“Hahahahaha,” my grandma laughed. “Nice of you to join us Randy, really, it is. I now have 2 of the 5 machines I need, and it just occurred to me that you have the time machine. Would you like to hand it over?”

“Never!” I just remembered that was one of the first questions she asked me when I entered the castle. Well, I'm glad that's the only thing she knows I have. If she found out I had the teleporter as well, she'd be more desperate. “You'll never get it... because I don't have it.”

“You know something Randy, I never could trust you, you were always childish and suspicious. That is why I had a back-up, well actually he was here before you and became my hidden right-hand man, but all that doesn't matter now. Kill him!”

The guy in the cape approached me sullenly, smoothly, and faintly. I could see he too developed the sync power, his glowed bright red, engulfed with darkness. How could this be? There is only one chosen one right? Is this even possible? His sync power is much more powerful than mine; he must have been training for years. His powers are so dark and demonic that being too close to him causes me to weep. He must be a necromancer! Only a necromancer can obtain such power. The essence of his power flew within his hands, as he jabbed me in the ribs, then chest, next the kidney, then the heart. It all happened so fast. I feel to the ground paralyzed, my vision blurred, but I was still alive. Whoever this guy was didn't want me dead.

I mentally passed out on the ground, observing things that went on faintly. When I finally gained consciousness I could see a guy with a sword taking the necromancer head on. Hokushi was that guy. He wasn't alone either. I saw Slithe and Sakura fighting him as well. My grandma was also in the fight. Was this a dream? Could this be real? Slithe swooped me up and put me on his back. "Wake up! Wake up!" Slithe called out to me. "You need to use your powers to help defeat the queen!" Have you ever felt nauseous after waking up? Almost like a hangover. Well I passed out and let them continue the fight on their own.

Grandma pulled out her wand and tried to turn Slithe into a frog several times but Slithe, built like a snake, is just so smooth and reflexive he dodged all of them. The dark-caped necromancer used his mere hands alone to take on both Sakura and Hokushi. "Clash" went the Togashi as it collided with the bright red index finger of the necromancer. He used his sync power to coat his entire body, making him virtually invisible.

I woke up again realizing that if I just gave up now, then I would have wasted all my effort and time just to get here. As I rose I could feel the power within me, the power of the sync power. My body began glowing bright red-orange, flowing with sync energy. I could feel another one of the energy burst coming again, I could just explode with energy, but that would harm Slithe, Sakura and Hokushi. And that is the last thing that I would want to do.

“mwuhahahahaaaa” my grandma began to laugh in an eerie tone “silly child, you could never defeat us, you’re just too darn weak, and that grandma of yours, yeah I found that book, and saw all that you have, you will never save your cousin Carmen, and you will never get to your grandma, and never shall you get home.”

“Oh yes I will,” I spoke with determination “just you wait.”

“Use the sync power to fuse with Hokushi! Do it! Now!” Slithe began yelling at me.

So I did just that. My body began to glow brighter and brighter. A string of light began flowing towards Hokushi. His whole body was glowing with a bright blue light as well as mine. The string of light began pulling us closer and closer together until we began to merge. Soon enough we became one. Renkai. That’s what we called us. Except when you usually think that when people merge, they would have a split personality, except in this merge, I had all the control. I have no idea where Hokushi went. Possibly because of the sync power? Regardless of who had control, I had the sync power and a nice cool sword... and also, I had super swift agility and speed. I think even got a bit taller.

Taking advantage of my speed, I managed to slice one of the necromancer’s arms off with this nice cool sword.

While I was doing that my fake grandma was so in shock at what I, Renkai, have done, that she didn't even notice Sakura drawing her bow and striking her in the stomach with it. The weird part is, as the arrow began to pierce her skin, green, gooey stuff began oozing out of her. I'm guessing that that was her blood, the blood of a witch.

Now that the leader was gone, the necromancer suddenly disappeared; we were all so busy examining the green blood that we didn't pay any attention to the necromancer. "Oh well" it wasn't like he was any threat to begin with. So I grabbed the teleporters, time machines, and the connecter. The ones in the pocket of my grandma's dress pocket, and the ones I originally had.

"Finally! I have all the five great machines." I shouted out of enjoyment. Now that I am Renkai, it feels like I have more self-empowerment, confidence, and courage. It makes me feel good inside. "I think that it would probably be a good idea if I destroyed them"

"No!" Sakura shouted, breaking out of her quiet shell. "If you were to destroy them now, you won't be able to get home, and also it would help if there are more in other dimensions. Just maybe not ours. We need a system in place for managing these things".

"You're probably right, about that, so what do I do in order to erase them from history itself?"

"That's where I come in!" Slithe began to speak and transforming to his human form "yes, I am a dragon, but my job is to protect and restore the space time continuum. Humans believe I do not exist, but indeed I do, traveling throughout the dimensions fixing everything."

"And that helps how?" I cut him off on his little speech.

“Well I own the book of history, all I have to do is erase it from history.”

“Couldn’t you have done that to begin with to prevent all this from happening?”

“There are lessons to learn, people to meet, you cannot merely skip through life, you must wait patiently, gaining wisdom throughout the wait”

“What the hell are you talking about?” the longer I am Renkai, the more arrogant I began to feel. “Whatever, my mission is still not over; I have to go and get Carmen, and then go and get grandma so I can go home.”

“What about Sakura, you can’t leave her now that you are infused with Hokushi?”

Sakura... never did notice her till now... she was always so invisible... I always suspected the romance between Hokushi and Sakura, but I never understood it being that I was only 12 years old. Now that I am Renkai, it feels like I gained 4 years of age. I feel intrigued by Sakura... this warm feeling in my heart... tender.... Happiness with 30% content... feeling of care... uneasy feeling... the feeling of love. I just want to hug Sakura, caress her, kiss her tender lips gently, while rubbing my hands through her silky hair.

“She can come with me, in fact, I think we all should go, I don’t think that we should separate just yet, at least until the fusion wears off.”

“Deal.”

Then the magical Slithe, full of mysteries and wonder opened up a worm hole, with his nice sharp talons and took

us to my dimension in the time of 2010.

Heiress of Paris



“After an hour of walking in silence...”

We landed somewhere in Paris. The time was night. The city lights shined bright. Slithe landed us in an alley to keep from being discovered.

“Wow! Is this Paris?” Sakura asked.

“Yes it is.” Slithe said. The Slithe transformed into a Chihuahua, to fit in to the society.

“Why Chihuahua?” Sakura asked again.

“It’s to fit in to the society, the last thing I need is someone seeing me, then we will have to go through that same issue with fixing the space time continuum once more.”

The 5 great machines was now a thing of the past. It began to rain. The wet streets stretched out for miles and miles as we walked in search of any sign of someone named Carmen Avila. As we walked Slithe began teaching me how to control my sync power better. Slithe noticed that my anger and desperation forces the sync power into action, he preferred I’d use a more positive emotion.

While Slithe, who was now a Chihuahua, lectured me on how to control it better, I spent most my time looking at Sakura, ignored 99.9% of everything Slithe said. He’s a dog

for goodness sake, who listens to a dog, I mean like come on, let's be real here.

So while I was staring at Sakura, she stared back at me. She stared at me with a smirk, hunching her shoulders, doing the flirty eyebrow thing that girls do. And of course, me being a guy, I flirted back, did the eyebrow thing that guys do, added a little smirk myself. After about a while of staring and smirking down the street, our hands met. Tender hands were that of Sakura. I didn't want to let go, but something came over me. Not sure what, but I just couldn't do it anymore. Something so right, has never felt so wrong.

After an hour of walking in silence, Sakura turned to the fur-soaked Chihuahua to ask Slithe if we could shelter from the rain, and go searching for Carmen another day. I could see it in Sakura's face that she liked me and began to get more and more jealous as we used all of our attention to search for another girl that was not her.

So we walk into a café, to ask for direction, help, or something or other. It didn't really help if you entered a café with a dog, and there's a huge sign that says "No dogs allowed". The store manager yelled and kicked us to the curve. Would have been literally if we didn't rush out as soon as we did. He was a big man, a very big man, almost twice the size of an average sumo wrestler.

We turned to an alley so that Slithe could turn into something, more fit into society. So he turned into an old man. Yes, seriously, an old man. It couldn't have gotten any worse. So we entered the café a second time. This time the manager was about to kick us out again until he noticed there wasn't a dog anywhere in sight.

"Is there any hotels nearby?" Slithe asked.

"Yes there is, if you went about a mile down the street, you should see a big sign that says HOTEL." The manager said in an almost unsure way. "But didn't you have a dog with you earlier."

Slithe answered "no" and we went to the hotel. We even almost made a reservation if we had money. But who needs a reservation when you can live with a princess. Yep, we saw her, it was Carmen. In her fabulous pink dress, fabulous tiara, fabulous shoes, hair in a bun, fabulous pearls, paparazzi all around her taking fabulous pictures, blonde hair, with a Chihuahua in her purse. I'm surprised that is even my cousin. Well we walked up to her, and got taken away by her body guards.

We needed to find another way around. She was heading towards her imperial suite so all we had to do was have Slithe turn us into flies while, we stalk her to her room. That would be nice, if Slithe didn't turn himself into a fly and leave me and Sakura stranded. We needed to devise our own plan. So I let Sakura think of one. Her plan sucked, but it was fun doing it. We dressed up, like prince and princess went to the front desk and asked to see Princess Carmen. The plan worked at that point, we got directions, got to the suite door, where the body guards were. Walked up to them. They asked questions. Everything went well until they asked us what are names were. That plan wasn't well thought out, so we stuttered over our names and they showed us the door, to the elevator.

Now my plan, take off our costumes, and walk up to the body guards casually, make sure no one was around, and fight. It didn't go too well, seeing that Sakura took out both of them with her arrows from a distant. We still flirted with each other throughout the whole time trying to get inside the imperial suite.

Too bad we did all that too late because when we entered the suite, Slithe had been already having a conversation with Carmen about what happened and why we need her. Of course it would be Slithe to be the one to tell her that. Since he seemed to know just about everything.



The Day Away



"It was night by now, 2 days after the previous day"

After everything had been settled with Carmen, and the rise of new sun had come, we were off on our mission once again. Of course Carmen, being the heiress that she was, wanted to stay, take a break, get her nails done, get her hair done, spend hours in the mirror brushing her hair, go shopping, go to the spa, and a whole bunch of stuff like that. I wasn't up for it, and neither was Slithe. I'm sure Sakura would enjoy that, but we really don't have time for enjoyment.

In fact I don't even know what our mission is; our motivation, aspiration, anything. All I know is that we had to get Carmen, but for what reason? "Slithe," I began depending on him, hoping I would get some answers. "What is the reason we need Carmen again?"

"Not sure," Slithe responded. "You said that we needed to get her so that you can go and get your real grandma."

"I did?" My memory became only a memory now. Being Renkai for so long has started to take its toll on me. "Slithe, I thought you knew everything."

"Indeed I do, but knowing everything doesn't always mean that it is always easy to remember, there are so many time zones I have been through were everything has been

so different each time, pretty much everything you can think of and more exist."

"I'll say," Carmen began to speak. "Never have I seen a talking dragon, let alone a real dragon before."

"Wait, is your name princess Carmen?" Sakura continued the dead conversation.

"Yes, why?"

"Well, I think I know how she may get us home. Well, see there was this story my parents used to tell me over and over again, about a princess that was sort of a drag-queen and wanted everything her way. She used to make her friends brush her hair, be rude to her boyfriend, and spend hours admiring herself in the mirror. Until one day she got trapped into a cave where she spent the rest of her life feeding on bugs."

"That doesn't sound very pleasant, at all." I spoke in.

"I would never eat bugs! You have to be losing your mind lady!" Carmen yelled as she continued admiring herself in her hand-mirror.

"No, I think that she is going somewhere with this," Slithe finally spilled the beans "there is a story of such, and I think that we saved her from that fate, and I'm sure that is what your grandma was trying to get you to do, maybe she wanted you to save her because she is connected to your own time somehow, I can't remember, she must have some kind of power, but I really don't think that she is aware of that power around this time. We must wait a week to find out. Until then, we must travel to an underwater cavern south of Tokyo on foot."

“What?!?!” Carmen yelled, finally dropping the mirror on the floor by her bed in which she sat on. “Carmen does not walk, ok? I’ll call a jet, or maybe even get a yacht if that’s ok with you.”

“Yes, I think that is a splendid idea.” Sakura agreed. I honestly didn’t care, I had this huge headache and I felt just so out of it.

“I figured you’d say that, but walking is healthier, besides, getting on a yacht would mean, we had to get on a yacht full of wild college kids on spring break. This could be a nuisance.”

“Oh, come on, this could be a relief from all of the drama we had, I’m really exhausted, I think they we should take time to enjoy ourselves.” Sakura added in her input. “Besides, look at Renkai over there, the poor boy is suffering from tension headache.” I’m guessing she knew that because I had my hand on my forehead and was squinting.

“Fine, we’ll go on spring break then.”

Both Sakura and Carmen cheered. I could tell that they were building a friendly relationship. Speaking about relationships, I believe my headache came from Sakura. Thinking about her all night long drove me crazy. Having so many other things that should be on my mind not be there, made it even worse, because I couldn’t think straight anymore.

“Alright, so let’s go!” I rushed everyone, mostly because I was irritated. I just can’t wait for the fusion to go away.

So by the time we got to the yacht, it felt like we shouldn’t be there, but my headache had been cured by

that time, so I spent most my time in the pool, with all the college girls. Being inside a pool full of sex-crazed girls was kind of kinky; it made me feel a little sex-crazed myself. Not knowing where Slithe and Sakura went, I played a game of water-polo with all the chicks. While Carmen spent her time sun tanning on the bench with her 2-piece bathing suit and sun glasses on.

While Carmen was busy trying to look pretty, as if she was just some famous pop-star or something, oh wait, she *is* a princess huh? Well who cares I was having a blast. After all the fun was over and everyone decided to do their little hook-up a.k.a “one-night-stands”, I went to go check on Sakura and Slithe to see if they are ok, and nothing bad had happened.

Sakura was in tears. Slithe had just left the room. By this time he had turned into a little boy. He seemed a little reassuring. So I’m guessing he had came in to check on her, and is leaving because he knew I was coming, and it would probably be better if someone her own age talked to her. Moving the box of tissues out of the way I sat down on the bed beside her. I rubbed her back hoping to cheer her up a little before I ask her what is wrong. Too bad she started talking first.

“I can’t believe you!” Sakura scolded me.

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“Don’t act like I don’t know, I saw you over there flirting with all those chicks in that pool.” I figured the whole jealousy phase was over, but I guess not. The fact that she was upset because she *thought* I was flirting, is a huge red flag.

“I wasn’t flirting; I was having fun, being a guy, you know?”

“No I don’t... you don’t realize do you? I’m in love with you! That’s why I’m acting the way I am now.”

“...Sakura...” Words began to become hard to form. I was shocked, and the mood was soft and warm. I grasped Sakura by the hand. “I love you too.” Then our lips met. We spent the afternoon making out on the bed, and telling each other lies that seemed soothing to the ears at the time, that neither one of us will ever remember. Sakura and I were meant to be together. There’s nothing out there that could possibly separate us now.

It was night by now, 2 days after the previous day; Slithe had us all meet at the deck. He had something important to say, seeing how he was in his dragon form. Sakura and I were prepared to ditch the meeting he called, but unfortunately we aren’t in any position to ignore anything Slithe says, or else we won’t be able to get home or complete our mission. Unfortunately Carmen beat us to the whole “ditch” plan; she was nowhere to be found. We checked the pool, tanning booth, all bathrooms, and all rooms. The last place we expected her to be was in the captain’s room, the place where the control of the ship is located. She was changing the ship’s course to go to some island.

“What are you doing?” I yelled at her.

“Well, that island over there, it’s mine, and I forgot my make-up and nail filer so I’m going to my island to go pick up an extra.”

“Carmen, put the course back, it’s time for us to go, this is our stop, this ship is going to New Orleans, and if we

don't stop now we'll miss the underwater cavern." Slithe began to speak.

"Ok, we can do that, but I need to look good before I totally ruin my hair in that salty-icky water." She said while reprogramming the ship with its latest edition of cruise control. "Besides, where is the captain, don't they need a captain to operate these things?"

Slithe growled, charged at Carmen as if he were going to attack her. He wrapped her up with his tail. Someone started to come. "What's all that noise!" they shouted. It was the captain. He saw Slithe in his dragon form. Everything became awkward. But I could see a shadow approaching behind him. Whack! The person behind him knocked him out cold with a beer bottle. That person was Sakura.

"Sorry, I reacted with my instinct." She said.

"Ok, that's enough; we must leave before he wakes up." So Slithe turned us all into dolphins and we were off to the undersea tavern. I have to admit, being a dolphin definitely felt carefree. It was also stressful, how I'm used to have fingers, and instead we have a fin. I'd admit dolphins have a pretty difficult life, it was hard to swim, and as we got deeper into the water it was hard to tell which way was up. Luckily we weren't any ordinary dolphin, according to Slithe, because we didn't need to go up and get air.

"I can see it, the tavern; its right ahead of us isn't it." I was in shock, by the fact that he said we had to wait a week and only 3 days have gone by.

"Yes, it is." Slithe responded.

As we entered the tavern it began getting dryer and dryer, eventually we approached land. Slithe then turned us

back into are normal selves. Well I guess it depends on your definition of normal. Carmen on the other hand, began reminiscing inside the cave as if she saw it before. We all know that it's just another one of her "damsel in distress" acts.

"I know this place." She said.

"You do?" Sakura asked.

"Yeah it's the scary basement of my island."

"Wait, so you have a tavern underneath your island and you didn't tell us?" I scolded.

"Well I did say that this is the *scary* basement, not a tavern-thingy or whatever you're talking about."

"Well since you have a whole island above, can't we go rest there, and get back to this mumbo jumbo business later." Sakura asked Slithe.

"We'll every time I allow you guys to rest, and take a break, bad things happen." He retorted.

"What could possibly happen on a private island?"

"A lot and I don't want to find out, but maybe it is a good lesson for you to learn, plus I am getting tired of being on my guard all day so, yes, we can go."

So Carmen led us through the scary basement, which is also an undersea tavern. We came across some stairs that lead us up to the top of the island, inside her castle. As rich as Carmen is, I'm sure she has more than one castle. Inside the castle we all decided to pick our own rooms. Of course, Carmen had her own room, where she can brush her hair,

apply make-up, and look at herself until morning. I never thought I'd meet someone that was this conceited, but you never know what you could meet if you venture out in the world. I chose a room and got stuck with Sakura because she doesn't like the feeling of being alone inside of a huge castle with all the rooms and hallways looking the same. With that being said, Slithe also thought it would be a good idea if he monitored Carmen, make sure she is safe. The time was night and it wasn't exactly pleasing in anyway, to be inside a dark scary castle, where all the statues looked real, and it felt like shadows were following you. I think that we were all so scared that we walked side-by-side really closed together.

Other than the really scary part, Sakura and I finally got a moment alone from all the drama. We snuggled each other trying to get warm. If we weren't in the predicament that we were in where everything is so rushed then we would have probably had sex or something, but unfortunately we had to get as much sleep as possible for the big day ahead of us. Feels like this is the first time I got sleep since the war.



Hidden Revealed



“Carmen has the kind of castle that you have to pull down the lever to open the bridge...”

At about what appeared to be 6 in the morning Sakura awoke, I was still halfway sleep, but there was a bunch of noise going on for about an hour now that was still a little distracting. However, I ignored it, told Sakura to go check on it, seeing as to that she was the only one concerned about it. She got up and went to go check on what the noise was. Everyone, excluding Sakura was still in bed sleep, ignoring the commotion out of exhaustion. To me, it sounded like a bunch of people yelling, screaming, and panicking. Surely enough it was. Sakura peeked through the castle's front door. The door creaked gently. She could see a bunch of people outside running around, screaming. She could even see a yacht. In fact, it was that very same yacht. She even saw that very same captain, whose head she had bashed. The first thing that came to mind was that Carmen never did reset the course to its original destination. There were so many distractions at that time that we had to rush and leave immediately; not once did the ship come to mind.

Carmen has the kind of castle that you have to pull down the lever to open the bridge that leads to the door. In this case, the bridge came down by itself. The loud plow of the bridge touching the water made a huge distraction. The people on spring break drew their attention towards the castle. One of them shouted “look there, they are in the castle”. By the sounds of that, you can't help but assume

that they are in search of us. The captain did not forget about the dragon he saw, and he was after the reward money and the fame. As the angry-starved people noticed Sakura peeking, they began to form somewhat of an angry mob. The only thing that they were missing is torches and pitchforks. Thanks to modern technology they have guns, shotguns, grenades, bombs, cages, whips, cuffs, and if they really meant serious business they'd have missiles and snipers. Unfortunately getting a hold of all the weapons in the limited time that they had, would be impossible, I'm assuming the captain had those weapons hidden in the cargo.

They began to charge. Sakura stood there stunned. She felt paralyzed, in shock, still trying to absorb everything that just happened. First thing that came to mind: "there's no point in running, with that many people, all those weapons. There's no way we can defeat them. Even if we could, we'd have to have someone hide Slithe, can't risk him being seen. Oh yea, I forgot he can just transform. Carmen would be useless; in fact she would just get in the way. 2 people versus many don't exactly seem like the brightest idea. Perhaps we could run for it, but the castle is too big, it could take hours to get to the tavern. There's no hope. But I still believe. An answer shall come up when the time is right."

Sakura gets caught peeking outside and they eventually catch her. They take her by her hands and chain her up. Slithe, being in a deep slumber that he probably shouldn't have gone into, being that he is the almighty dragon of time, and being awake for millions of years tends to put you into an un-disturbable slumber. Being as useless as he was, he was caught and caged. Even though I was sleep at the time I could still hear everything that was going on, but it was one of those dreams where you hear everything, but you think that it is happening in your dream so you don't react to it, as you would if you were awake; if

that makes any sense at all. After realizing that it wasn't just a dream and that all of this was really actually transpiring it was too late. By the time I woke up they were all standing near my bed looking at me as if I was about to explode. When I looked inside the mirror across the room I could see that my body began demerging with Hokushi. We began to slowly become separated, the fusion is has now timed-out. I am no longer this hot-shot tuff guy I once was when I was merged with Hokushi, I am just regular me. Another thing that I had noticed was that I was chained to the bed. They began poking me with sticks. Asking me where Carmen was. I was so tired that I couldn't even respond. I guess I didn't have to because two minutes later I heard a screech.

I'm assuming it came from down the hall of many halls. The leader of the bunch, or the captain, began looking at me, we both knew that the scream had to have come from Carmen. The reason that they were after Carmen shall remain a mystery. It could be because he wants revenge, because of her wealth, or because she was the only way off the island. Whatever the reason was it really didn't matter that much because his objective was the same; to get Carmen. So as everyone left, I could see Carmen entering the room. She unchained me, Hokushi, and Sakura. She unchained us with a bobby-pin. I guess rich girls know how to do something other than admire themselves after all. After she unchained us, she noticed that there was one extra person than there should be.

It probably would have been a good idea to tell her that I was fused with Hokushi. She assumed he was one of the spring-breakers and yelled out "guards". We attempted to cover her mouth but it was too late. We quickly un-caged Slithe; who was still sleep by this time and rushed down the halls with a giant dragon on our shoulders. It was a good idea that we had Hokushi with us; he was the strongest of all four of us.

As we got downstairs to the tavern, there was a cool mist by now. The door slammed behind us, closing the door on all the spring-breakers. It was really dark, so dark that we could not see. Then all of a sudden I saw a red light. It wasn't unfamiliar or anything, I recognized it right away. It's not like he was shouting, or anything that he would have just given it away. He kept saying that "this is the end" and "you'll never get home" and a whole bunch of other stuff that made no sense to me, because it was all followed by "I am the end". Slithe was still dozing off, he became a reticent to us by this point, and we flopped him down on the ground, which was followed by a big "BANG" due to his enormous size.

Then something important finally came out of the necromancer's mouth. "I drugged that dragon of yours, so he'll be sleep for another hour and a half, so let's make this quick. Oh and by the way, those people outside. I did a little talking with the captain after that surprise attack you made; I reassured him that he would get 75% of the ransom from that heiress of yours. Apparently he didn't do a good job at caging you, so I'll take matters at my own hand." I could tell that this was going to be a battle against me and him, which is unfair because he is ten times stronger than me. Being that it was pitch black and all we could see was a red light from him, it was hard for us to see where one another was at, so I told them that I would do all the fighting, and to spend their time staying away from the light.

I could definitely tell that the necromancer had definitely gotten slower from the last time that we had an encounter. I dodged every attack that he threw at me. I also could tell that he was beginning to become weaker and weaker, as the red coating slowly began to dissipate. With my body glowing light blue, he could see me just as clearly as he could see himself. A blast to the face by me, the

necromancer's mask and cloak was partially disintegrated, all that was left was a tattered black cape which took form as the cloak was destroyed, black S.W.A.T . pants and black combat boots. I could feel a cool wind on my shoulder as the smoke from the explosion cleared. The necromancer would have completely been revealed if it wasn't for that big bang. The necromancer destroyed the tablet so that we won't be able to read it. Just as the light began to penetrate through the broken stones, I was about to get a look at who this master in disguise really was. As I looked up he was already leaving. I got a good glance at him and he disappeared into thin air; literally. Just by that glance I knew that he had a familiar face. If I recall right he looked something like Shanti. I knew my brother was evil, but I never knew that he was willing to kill me. Knowing this information made it all the more easily to prepare for our next encounter.



Time Apart



“Soon enough the entire jet collapsed.”

While Slithe still asleep we hardly knew what to do. The temple was gone. All we *could* do was fend for ourselves. Luckily we had Carmen with us. She had took out her phone and called out a private jet. It was easy for the jet to enter, especially with a big gaping hole at the top of the temple. When the jet got here we pretended that he was just a giant costume for Chinese New Year. We even told him to drop us off at Hong Kong. The best part is that while we were on the plane we sort of had a clue to what Carmen’s secret power was. Her necklace constantly glowed throughout the entire time we were on the jet.

Not only that, every time that it glowed, it seemed like everything began to warp. Though the pilot was completely ignorant to what was going on. He didn’t even know anything happened, but we all knew, we all knew indeed.

On our flight to Hong Kong, me and Sakura spent less time talking. She was so confused as to who she really liked. Me or Hokushi? The funny part is Hokushi didn’t even know what happened ever since we fused together. Before then, I always thought that Sakura liked Hokushi, but by the expression on her face she just looked sad and confused.

“So exactly, what is going on?” Hokushi responded, in search on some answers that may be somewhat relevant.

“A...” I attempted to speak.

“NOTHING!” Sakura cut me off before I could even get a word out.

“Huh? What exactly happened? I’m sure something had to happen. First we were battling some guy, and next thing you know, the dragon is dead, we are hanging around some silly rich girl, a group of people chased us, and boom! We were in another battle with that very same guy we left off at.”

“Eh... not... nothing happened, ok? You just merged with Randy, which is why your memory is blocked.” Sakura attempted to answer, but was trying not to give out too much information. I knew that she did not want me to talk, being that I’m a guy and I tend to be straight-forward with everything.

“Well, I know that, I’m not stupid! Why can’t you just tell me what happened?”

“Nothing happened! I keep telling you that nothing had happed!”

“Something did happen; otherwise we would still be fighting with that guy! You did something huh? You just don’t want to let me know about it huh? I bet you found somebody else didn’t you?”

“...” No one spoke. It became and awkward silence.

“Are you kidding me? You did!!!! I thought that we had something going here? I bet it was that Randy kid huh?”

“...” another awkward silence had occurred.

“I can’t believe you!!!” Hokushi repeated as he approached me and attacked. We began wrestling on the ground for about a while. Occasionally one of us landed a punch or two. And of course there was a lot of yelling in the background. You’d think that it was so loud that it would wake the dead. To me, after going through everything that I had went through, wrestling was like thumb wrestling is to a gang war.

And of course being who we were it eventually got worse. Not just because we were violent and strong, but also because the environment was unstable. The contents of the plane kept warping, as well as our bodies. Hokushi drew his sword as I channeled the sync power. Energy began flowing through me rapidly. I could feel a cool wind upon my shoulder; sending a chill to the back of my spine and all around. It felt as though I have full control of the sync power and that I could manipulate it better than I could before now. The first thing that came to mind was the cool thing that the necromancer could do; coat my entire body with the sync power.

Out of intimidation I could see that Hokushi had a trick up his sleeve as well. Which kind of through me off because when we were at war, I never actually saw before. His sword, that everyone likes to call Togashi, turned red. But not just any normal type of red, but a blood red. It was kind of scary in fact, but having that energy coating technique down packed made me all the more confident.

However, he strikes. It wasn’t a normal slashing kind of strike. The sword itself did not actually have to touch me. With a strike of his sword a red light began to approach closer and closer till it hit me. When it did it knocked me to the ground. No injuries were present, as I had my energy coating to protect me from serious injury. Eventually I did like last time, repeating the same techniques that I always

do; create a sword with the sync power. With every swipe of the sword followed another burst of light energy from Hokushi's sword.

I used my sword to deflect it. Unfortunately we had passengers on the jet and it wasn't exactly easy to maintain balance, pay attention to everything that's going on, and try not to deflect it at Sakura or Carmen. Not only that I wasn't exactly all that skilled, the only reason I was as good as I was the last time was because I was fused with Hokushi. After the fusion I could feel the weight of arrogance leaving my shoulders. Everything was so crazy on the jet; every swipe of the sword put another gash into the jet. And it was all Hokushi's doing seeing as to I didn't even get a chance to attack.

Soon enough the entire jet collapsed. With the pilot not paying any attention and completely unaware of what was going on. We all fell. The sad part is that Hokushi didn't get the final blow which took out the jet. It was Carmen's necklace and the warping of time or something like that.

I spent most my time in vain. What was I to do? I couldn't fly, I wasn't all that skilled, and I'm not the heroic type. So I just drifted off in the air, dangling rapidly, waiting to approach the seas.

From the corner of my peripheral vision I could see something flying. I was too dizzy to see exactly what it was. One thing I did know was that the last person it could be was Hokushi. As I adjusted my head to see if I could get a better look, it appeared to be more human-like. I began to think that it was Carmen, being that she seemed to be skilled at just about everything, and seems to save us at the most unexpected times. As I adjusted my eyes to the rapid movement, I saw that it began to take a male figure. So it couldn't have possibly been Carmen. It also had jets at the

end of its shoes so that he could drift through the air with ease. He had already gathered up Sakura and Carmen. All that was left was me and Hokushi, which I doubt he would come and save us being that we were the second reason the ship collapsed. Too bad I misjudged him, he came and got both me and Hokushi, and before we knew it, we were both on land.

I couldn't exactly tell where we were, mostly because I had been drifting for so long I forgot where our destination was. Something tells me our destination was China, but something else tells me that is wrong. We ended up being stuck on a plateau instead. It seemed kind of cool how the plateau was made; it was nice and flat, perfectly flat. It was so perfect; I'd say it was man-made. The mood was peaceful due to the warm temperature and the awesome sunset. It was cool because once we gained consciousness it gave us time to work things out and figure other things out.

With Hokushi's big arrogant mouth he soon changed the soothing peaceful mood to a devastating one. "Who the hell are you?" he began speaking toward the mystery person that saved our lives.

"Hokushi! Shut up! That's no way to talk to someone who saved your life. If anything you should be thanking him" Sakura insisted but got no response from it. Hokushi began to fold his arms. Then Sakura began addressing the mystery man "Sorry for my friend over there. He tends to get out of hand sometimes."

"It's ok, it's nice to know that I exist sometimes," The mystery man finally began talking "Well my name is Perry Nickelson, I happen to be the pilot of that jet. I was originally hired to ambush you guys, but all that is behind me now."

“Hired? Wasn’t it Carmen who hired you?” I began entering the conversation.

“No, not really, there was some other guy that had hired me, wore a torn black cape, I’m sure you know of him, especially being that he put a squad on you, to stalk and watch your every move”

“Are you serious?”

“Very much so”

“So is that the reason we had such a hard time, ever since we got Carmen?” Sakura imputed.

“What is that supposed to mean? I had nothing to do with where we are now?” Carmen spoke her mind.

“Actually Carmen, to tell you the truth, Sakura is right. Ever since we got you, we have been having the worst of luck. Like the cruise, the castle, and now the jet.” I tried to explain to her.

“Stop making it seem like it’s all my fault, it’s your fault that guy keeps chasing us, besides he wasn’t after me, he was after you guys. I’m just an innocent heiress who is so popular that anyone could find me. Besides I got you out of most of the stuff. Like when you were all captured, I got us a ship, and I got us an escape from the castle by calling a jet. Not only that my necklace saved us from an ambush that might have happened”

“Yes you may have helped us, but while you were helping us, you were also putting us more and more in danger than you realized.” Sakura added.

“I don’t think this guy is telling us the truth, I think that he is trying to get us all to hate each other. Just to distract us from the real trouble. Besides where is the dragon. I bet while we were all fighting he took away the dragon and gave him to that guy in the cape while we weren’t paying attention” Hokushi spoke without making harsh criticism.

“Oh my god, I think he might actually have a point.” I agreed.

“Nice work Hokushi, that guy is a phony, he lied to us to turn us against each other so that we wouldn’t remember the dragon.” Sakura agree along with us.

“In fact I don’t even think that you told s your real name, huh? Pencilneck!” I figured it out somehow; I had always wondered what had happened to Pencilneck. He was never around throughout the entire time. Perry Nickelson? How more obvious could it be? Since he seemed to know about the guy in the cape and almost everything that was going on, I was almost positive he knew who the guy in the cape really was.

“So exactly who is the guy in the cape you know so much about but won’t clearly tell us about?”

“Why don’t you ask him yourself?”

Behind him appeared a guy in a black cape. The cape was still ripped so that we could see only half of his face, but that was good enough for us. We knew exactly what we needed to do now to get some answers. We had to fight, and actually kill them this time. I knew that I wouldn’t be able to defeat him without the powers of Hokushi to make Renkai, but Hokushi and I still have a feud going on so I have to trust in my own abilities. Not that I have any.

A New Power



“Fire began flowing through her.”

As Pencilneck spoke those words I saw our caped stalker appear out of thin air. He landed on the ground a ghastly, right behind Pencilneck. We did not run. We didn't back out because if we made it this far together then there was no stopping us from getting farther. We were brimming with confidence as ever.

“hahahahaahaaaa,” Pencilneck laughed mysteriously, but for some reason in this reality Pencilneck appeared older than the necromancer. In fact Pencilneck looked older than what he used to be. He looked 21 years old, about 6'2. He even had a mustache. At first I didn't think anything of it, for the simple matter of the fact that I haven't seen him in a while. I could have assumed he was a different person, but there was so many clues leading up to that. “You are in for the fighting of your life now.”

“One question before we begin fighting?” I asked.

“Sure why not?” He answered a question with a question.

“I you are really Pencilneck, then why is it that you appear older than before.”

“Because I have attained a power that you have not.”

“And exactly what power is that?”

“This may sound a little weird, but I can control machines”

“So the power to control machines has aged you, I’m guessing that is not a good power then.” I didn’t believe him one moment. I don’t think that any power can make you age, especially as rapidly as it did. You can’t go from 15 to 21 in a week. Unless he was in same parallel universe in which time itself had sped up.

“Shut up you idiot. Let’s fight already.”

Pencilneck began floating around on his jetpack that we didn’t know he had until now. As he lifted up I thought he was going to use the booster shoes that he used to save us earlier to fly, but I was misled. Being on a plateau proved to be a perfect battleground, the only flaw would be falling off. This is cool because I just learned that I had a special power that the necromancer did not. I could manipulate the sync power out of my hand to a form, though doing so takes up a lot more energy than the coating thing. So I used that to form a sync person. It was cool because I could control him mentally. So we all just sort of relaxed while watching the sync man fights the pathetic Pencilneck. But I would have to admit, Pencilneck is pretty strong for a person who has no real powers.

With a punch to the chest, the sync man was off his guard, and then a punch to the jaw was followed. Every time Pencilneck punched the sync man I could feel it as well. Having the whole sync man seemed like the easy way out, but in reality It is much more straining. Plus trying to get the sync man to fly perfectly using mental strength alone did not work out so well. So I recalled him.

Punch after a punch. The battle between Pencilneck seemed a little too easy, it seemed like he was holding back. It reminded me of a boxing version of wrestling. After I recalled the sync man, Pencilneck had reached into a bag, in which we also did not know that he had until now, and threw out some silverfish ball things. He then took out a flute from his bag of mysteriousness and started playing it. The little silver balls begin slowly transforming into a huge big machine.

It was actually a robot. A really big one, there was about 12 of them; they were all about 8ft tall. So when he meant that he could control machines, I guess he meant to say that he could control make them and knew how to operate them well. And the robot began to attack. Carmen had jumped in front of us. Her necklace that she had worn was dangling by her waist on the hook of her belt. She had taken it off.

Fire began flowing through her. Her entire body was engulfed in it. She destroyed all the machines with a maleficent new fire powers that no one was aware that she had. Now that she had taken off the necklace everything is beginning to make sense now. The necklace was to hold in her powers until she was ready to use them, or possibly other reasons. "ahhhh," was the sound of the howls she made. "I'm gunna take you out!" she yelled repeating herself as she began to charged.

Carmen alone took out each of the robots. She could fly so that made it a little easier for her. All she had to do was fly right through the robots. One by one they dropped like a domino effect.

In The End



"How will I be able to save them and fight off the necromancer?"

Pencilneck did it again and again, over and over till there were about 156 of them running around. But we already knew what to do. While Carmen and Sakura (using her arrows) took on the robotic abominations, Hokushi fought Pencilneck; which left me with one option: the necromancer. The necromancer and I had so many run-ins now that we pretty much know each other's fighting styles and how to counter them. The best thing I like about this run-in is that we get to have a fight without any distractions of any sort. Once more the dark red sync power he attained engulfed his body. He was fully coated with it again.

I had learned that technique from him and our last run-in. Blast after blast; sword to sword, I copied everything he did to boost up the intensity, until he was eventually tired. Well at least that was what I was hoping for. He kept going on with great determination to end me. The necromancer seemed almost lifeless to me, as if he was some kind of puppet under a spell and could not think or function for himself. I had never even heard the necromancer talk since I saw him in the tavern, persuading me more and more that he had no real desire to kill me. In fact; he might not even have a desire at all. There was only one way to be for certain, there is always the power of speech.

Right before I began to talking I had backed away and lowered my guard, letting him know that I was coming to a pause. We had been fighting for 30 minutes now and I haven't heard him pant once. Even in short periods of dead silence I couldn't hear him breathe. "Why is it that you want me dead," I tried asking him, hoping he would answer "You know, there isn't really a reason to hate me, I'm a good person. Is it power that you seek? I'm not really the one for wielding great power, if anything you are strong as you are."

"..." The necromancer did not speak, breathe, hesitate, move, or even blink. Yes he looked a lot like Shanti, but he was less arrogant. Not to mention the red eyes, bloody red eyes. They bulged, seeming more and more deadly as I looked at them. After the verbal measures proved to be useless, we had to continue the more physical action.

Before we began I checked to see how the others were doing. They seemed to be holding up pretty well. The girls were fighting the robots while Hokushi took care of Pencilneck. As Carmen and Sakura were fighting the robots, Pencilneck kept making more and more, as he flew in the air to make them, it proved much more of a difficult task to try to fight him than Hokushi first thought. Sakura had a much more difficult time as she spent her entire time trying to fight one robot; she kept shooting arrows, but they just didn't work. Carmen was the only one on our team who wasn't having such a hard time. Being on fire can tire you out faster than usual, I could see the fatigue in Carmen, she began slowing down. The first thought that came to my mind was. "I need to do something, and fast, I need to wake up out of my shell and save them, because if I don't, we could all die here. And I would be the one to blame. I would have wasted all the hard work and time that everyone put into getting here. Everyone had their moment to shine and now it is mine!" That thought took its toll on me. Throughout

the entire time before now, I always felt weak, like I am useless and just in the way. But Slithe could see it in me. Only he could see that I had true potential. And Sakura, I must save her, though it sounds weird now that it did before when I became Renkai, but I really do like her. It's not just some weird creepy crush anymore; I am really in love with her.

But how? How will I be able to save them and fight off the necromancer? That's when it came to me. If I could use the sync power and shape it to any form freely as I choose then I should be able to shape it into something that would keep the necromancer occupied. I then used to create a box around him, from the ground up, the box slowly formed bars keeping him trapped temporarily. As he tried to figure a way out of the cage, I began to run as fast as I could; as I ran I forced the sync power out of both my hands until I made it over to the rest of the team. I blasted Pencilneck out of the sky. He fell to the ground rapidly; which was followed by a great explosion. His jetpack in which he landed on was severely damaged. Though he was still alive. "That should keep him out of the air for a while." I said as I stood side by side to Hokushi, he glared at me with great intensity, and I looked at him back with confidence and seriousness, he knew that I was getting serious and meant business. Just by looking at each other, it felt like we got over our differences and began to start all over. "Here's the plan, you tell switch roles with Sakura, help Carmen take out the robots."

For the first time in history Hokushi did what I said. Hokushi went to Sakura and told her to take care of Pencilneck. Using my peripheral vision I could see that the necromancer had managed to break out of his cage, and began charging in my direction in an angry rampage. Again I used my sync power. I used it to put up a humongous wall. If I were to measure it, it would be 70 feet tall and 300 feet

wide. Since the necromancer had been running so fast he ran in to the wall with great force. "Bong", the sound of the wall vibrated like a glass window. As Sakura began to pull the string of her bow, she turned in awe, in amazement to how much I have grown. I was brimming with confidence, and for once it felt like I was leader and gained the respect I truly deserved from Hokushi. After the necromancer recovered from the wall, which took merely seconds, he began banging on the wall with full-force. Which was followed by a rapid winding of the arms to gain momentum, and then he used his sync power to blast to wall to smithereens. The wall shattered to pieces, leaving no barriers for the necromancer. He had become much more vicious and desperate to kill me than he was before, it might have been because of me that he didn't want to fight earlier, but now that I am more confident, I proved to be a much more worthy opponent than before. Simultaneously the necromancer and I blasted each other using our sync power; every blast was followed by a circular running motion around and around the plain of the plateau. We were moving so fast and using so much force the plateau converted into a more edgy and less leveled terra firma; gust of sand that flew into the air. There was a great deal of it; a mini sandstorm began to take form. To conserve my energy, I used a much smaller barrier to shield myself from the forceful blasts he kept blowing at me. The blast were so strong the broke every barrier I put up with just one blow.

Just as it proved useless to protect myself from him, I began doing whatever came to my mind that seemed like it would work, because with the sync power, pretty much anything was possible. So I started out by coating my entire body as before; the necromancer began to mimic my every movement. I used the sync power to sprout sync arm which was pretty much an extension of my own arms. I lifted up my humongous yet heavy arms and arranged it into a fist formation and pummeled the necromancer into the

ground. Or at least I thought I did. Somehow the necromancer had gotten behind me. He used his reddish sync power to make a katana. He pieced it into my back. I fell to my knees. I began to freeze up. I looked around and all the robots had been destroyed. Pencilneck and Carmen had been lying on the ground as if they were dead. Which, by this point, I am sure has happened. Hokushi and Sakura stared at me. Tears rolled down Sakura's eyes. Hokushi began to charge while yelling, attempting to stop the necromancer from getting the finishing blow. Using their swords they fought. Togashi began to transform, it glowed blood red, it got bigger and bigger, till' the blade was the size of Hokushi. Intimidated by the transformation of his sword the necromancer got a bigger sword. They began fighting. Hokushi clearly had the upper hand when it came to power, but still coated with his sync power, the necromancer was unaffected every time Hokushi tried to pierce his skin. Knowing his limitation Hokushi came closer and closer to me. Eventually standing in front of me he began to talk. "I need you get up, I know you are injured, but don't give up just yet, I know there is still fight left in you, get up, you can do it, we need to fuse and become.... Renkai!" Knowing that Hokushi, the most arrogant and narcissistic person I have ever met in my life was encouraging me, was enough to make me snap out of it. So I stood up, almost falling over from fatigue. We then fused and became Renkai again.

Now having my own self-confidence and becoming Renkai, one who is full of self-confidence, I felt like the most powerful being ever to exist. The sync power I once had, felt like it was infused within me, everything that the sync power created, made it using light energy, but this time, something different had happened.... Not sure what.... But I grew bigger and bigger.... My actually body mass.... Material.... Began changing. I had gained a power that knew the necromancer could not do. Using Togashi at its transformed

state I began to attack the necromancer. The necromancer had a much harder time trying to fighting back so he spent his time protecting himself. That great wall that I built with my sync power earlier he kept using that thinking that it would protect him from the giant that I have now become. Not even that was strong enough, with every swipe of the sword was enough to destroy the wall, also with every swipe was followed by a huge gust of wind; Almost hurricane like. The same thing was repeated until the necromancer got closer and closer to Pencilneck, which he then fused with. Though he fused with Pencilneck, he did not have enough confidence to become as giant as I was. As I backed him into a corner, I lifted my hand as I once did to blast the necromancer with my sync power, I did it again. This time the power was so intense a crater was formed when the wind cleared. In the middle was the necromancer at his fused state. He was finished, there was no more energy for him to fight, releasing my sync power; I started to shrink into my regular form of Renkai, like before.

I, Renkai rushed down to the middle of the crater; followed by Sakura who carried Carmen with her. The necromancer was not dead. He was still alive and breathing. With blood dripping down from a cut on his lip. Wiping it with the back of his hand, he began to smirk. "Job well done, little bro." he began speaking, coughing up more blood surely after.

"Shanti? Is it really you? Why... why did you do this?" I questioned him, hoping to get an answer from him. But none was clarified. His eyes weren't red anymore so it was much easier for me to recognize him.

"You're seeking to get home right? Your journey is almost over, you can reset time and prevent this from happening, and all you have to do is go to the mystery volcano floating in the sky. There you can find Slithe. He is

being held captive by the Great Master, in that cloud over there," he pointed to a shadowy nimbus cloud. The cloud was gray; it stood out from all the other white clouds. "But you must fly there, all forms of transportation and help from outsiders will only alert the Grand Master. Here take my hand." I grasped his hand; he was giving me his sync power. I felt brimming with energy. Even stronger than I was before, but who would get the power once Hokushi and I separated? Honestly I really didn't care; I just wanted to go home. After my brother gave me all of his energy his hand collapsed and his body turned to dust; dragged away by the wind.

He was my brother alright, there had to be a reason why he had to do what he did. The answer to it lies somewhere upon a cloud, a magical cloud that contained a volcano. Though my brother proved to be the biggest trouble of my life, I still loved him. But I knew why. It was because I lacked confidence, lacking confidence made everyone walk over me, and also made me a much easier target. But now that he is gone, more questions drew closer. Will I ever see him again? Will I ever get home? Once I get home, what would become of Sakura and Hokushi? Will they become just a memory? Will I ever see them again? Tears rolled down my cheeks by the thought of it. Sakura put Carmen down and slowly stroked my back; hoping it would cheer me up. Which was followed by soothing words: "Everything's going to be alright," She began to cry as well "you hear me! So don't you cry! We are going to get through this and make everything all right again." She stood up.

I turn around and stood up facing her. I wrapped my hands around her waist. I pulled her towards me. Our lips convened. We passionately caressed each other. Her lips gave artificial respiration to my spirits.

After we finished kissing, we had to think about what we were going to do with Carmen. We couldn't exactly travel

to in the sky with Carmen. Especially since I was the only one out of the three that could actually fly. I was so used to depending on Slithe and Sakura for hope, transportation, and ideas, that when they were finally gone, I had no clue what to do. Luckily Sakura was excellent in the medical field so she could easily whip up some herbs. So we decided to go herb hunting; that idea seemed better than none at all. At least then, when Carmen gets healed we could get to the cloud without so much of a load. We climbed down the busted plateau with ease, with me carrying Carmen on my shoulder; Sakura was in front of me doing all the searching, since I wasn't exactly the brainy type. As we searched the plains we began to talk, this could have probably been the last time that we actually would get to be alone.

"So if I was to actually reset time, would you still remember me?" I asked her.

She had crouched to the ground picking herbs by the time I asked her. She prickled herself, coming to a stop. "I wouldn't forget you for the world, even if I have to write everything down to remember," her finger began to bleed. "The real question is will you remember me," she stopped the conversation as she stood up to ask me something "I need a bowl."

Well it wasn't exactly much of a question, more of a demand. Nonetheless, I made a bowl using the sync power. She took it. She claimed that it had a shocking sensation to it. She put the herbs she found into the bowl; mashed it up with her hands until it was all liquefied from the oils of the plant. When the medicine was ready I lied Carmen down on the ground, opened her mouth while Sakura poured the medicine down her throat. "And down the hatch it goes" she said. We could use some entertainment at this time, but the mood was so serious that I couldn't laugh. Being Renkai this time was definitely different from the first time. I didn't feel

as insecure like the last time, instead I felt melancholy and sad, it could be because everyone is dying. Well at least they appeared to be dead.

As time went on, finally Carmen came back to a lively state. Her eyes gradually began opening. After managing to blink twice, she picked herself up off the ground and began talking. "Oh my god, everyone is all like... teary and stuff."

"Yes Carmen, we are," Sakura rubbed her head and began shaking it, feeling like she Carmen couldn't possibly get any stupider. "We don't have much time to spare. We need to hurry up and get to the floating volcano. Carmen you still have the energy to move on right?"

"Ummm.... Sure but if you want me to fly then, I would need to go get my necklace first so that I can recharge my powers"

"Do what!!!" I began yelling. "How do you know that? Why is it that you knew how to control and maintain your powers but we needed to wait all this time in order for you to use them? Did you know that we thought you didn't know how to use them?"

"Sure.... But I clearly remember Slithe telling me that my power was the only way to take you home. Although he said that, I still don't even know how my powers will get you home. What does fire have to do with time?"

"Wait! Maybe your power has more to do with getting everyone home than you think. Maybe your powers are to help him get home, then to actually be the source of him getting home." Sakura put her input into the conversation. Although she made a good point, I wasn't quite sure of the point she was trying to make, but one thing that I was sure of was that: if I was going to get home somehow, the answer

would lie somewhere in those clouds, somewhere where a volcano can sustain itself in the sky without being seen, defying nearly all the laws of physics.

About the Author



His name is Jamal Muwwakkil and he is an alumni of Arizona State University. He was always pretty gifted. Even as a kid, he was always exceeding in his performance, also leading into his careers and business.

My Brother, My Problem



Jamal Muwwakkil